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THE ORAL HISTORIES OF SIX AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN
THEIR ECOLOGY OF ADVANCED PLACEMENT BIOLOGY

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THE ORAL HISTORIES OF SIX AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN
THEIR ECOLOGY OF ADVANCED PLACEMENT BIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the past in order to understand the complex phenomenon of students engaging in science (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003) specifically through the oral histories of six self-identified African American males enrolled in a high school Advanced Placement Biology class and the oral histories about events that followed during their post high school experiences. To elucidate an understanding of this phenomenon, this research explored the ecology of African American males' descriptions of their school science, their peer school science community, their lived experiences during and after graduation, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Many minority and low-income students are less likely to enroll in rigorous courses during high school (Education Trust, 2006). This study is of utmost importance because capturing the informants' oral histories may improve rigorous science education. Many African American male students are attending urban schools with an ever growing achievement gap among their White counterparts (Norman, Ault, Bentz, & Meskimen, 2001); therefore, they are disengaging in science. As a result, African American males are underrepresented in both science careers and achievements in science (Atwater, 2000; National Science Foundation, 1994).

The six oral histories highlighted the ecological factors that affected African American males regarding (1) the impact of their relationship with their mothers, (2) the understanding of personal responsibility, (3) the notion of a scientist, (4) the issue of gender being more of an obstacle than race, (5) the understanding that education is valuable, (6) the interactions and influence of relationships with others on their decisions, (7) the development of integrity through the participation in sports, (8) the ecological neighborhood environment influences an image, (9) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped the transition into higher education (10) the issue of race as it surfaced in their ecological environment, (11) the individual's personal effort determines their outcomes, (12) the need for recognition of internal satisfaction, (13) the role of portraying a hero, (14) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits, (15) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life, and (16) learning is interactive.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my students' voices of the past, the present, and the future, in particular: Earl, Anthony, William, Diamond, Donte and Gerald.

To the little girl's voice during a night meditation that echoed "Mommy I miss you!"

To my devoted parents Bassam and Raghda Halasa who are my teachers, protectors, and unfailing support system of life.

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Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

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CHAPTER I

INVESTIGATION INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Stories and narratives, whether personal or fictional, provide meaning and belonging to our lives. These stories attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. The story fabric offers us images, myths, and metaphors that are morally resonant and contribute both to our knowing and our being known. Maxine Greene (as cited in Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 334)

The Researcher: Meranda's Story

I don't remember much about my first day of school, but I remember Miss Halasa's biology class; she made that much of an impression on me. She began our first day by reading to us "The Little Engine That Could." Imagine, a class of 30 high school students, listening to a book we'd first heard before entering pre-school. She was eccentric, to say the least, but I loved every minute of it.

She was the only teacher I've ever had who went out of her way to ensure that every student was as successful as possible. I learned to come to her not just with questions about Biology, but with questions about life. We had many great discussions in room 125, her behind the stacks of books and papers always scattered about her desk, and I sitting on the black lab table, legs dangling, and mouth constantly blabbering.

Her room was a second home, not just to her, but to everyone. She was always there at the crack of dawn and always left well past dusk. If dedication were a crime, she'd have been imprisoned for life, and I bet that wouldn't have slowed her down one bit. If her room was empty, it probably just meant she'd taken our CRAYOLA [multicultural] group out to eat, or was in the auditorium practicing with the drama club.

I remember she used to make us keep lab notebooks and keep them precisely organized. You could hardly believe it was the same teacher who had a perpetual stack of backed up papers and binders on her desk, insisting on such orderliness. That was one of her many ironic quirks.

I remember the day our insect collection was due, she came dressed as a ladybug - looking ridiculous - but loving every second of it. She taught me to

face my fear of insects. The only alternative project she would give was a 20-page paper; I wasn't that scared of anything! She also taught me, through her eccentric personality and her amazing outgoingness, that it's not just OK to be different, but it's better that way.

I had her again my junior year of AP Biology. Like most of the class, I struggled, but she was always there long evenings, not just with me, but also with the other half of the class who just didn't understand concepts like mitosis and meiosis. I never thought I'd make it through that course, so when she insisted on my taking the AP test, I thought I was throwing my money down the drain.

That July I received my AP score and amazingly enough it was high enough to receive college credit. What I never thought was possible was exactly what ended up happening. She taught me never to give up. And even though I tell everyone not to take AP Biology unless they're sadistic, it changed my outlook on life. She made me stop saying I can't, and start saying "I think I can, I think I can (Piper, 1976, p. 3). (M. Watling, personal communication, May 15, 2003)

The narrative above serves as the quintessential example of the phenomena that occurred during my classroom teaching experience. Meranda was a White female, as identified in school records, who achieved all the pre-requested requirements to access the Honors and Advanced Placement Biology courses. This qualitative study utilized oral histories which are interwoven throughout the remaining chapters to provide meaning and contribute insight into the existing literature and theories; therefore, these narratives provided the framework with which to understand the study more fully.

As the researcher for this dissertation and also a participant on which the research is focused, I taught high school science for 10 years in an urban school district. After my first academic year, I observed that many freshmen in my courses were achieving above expectation. When I approached these students, they expressed doubt of their ability to meet the challenges of Honors courses. Over time, I began to observe that Black males, as identified on school records, were underrepresented as compared to their White males or females counterparts in Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) science courses. I

began challenging Black males to enroll in the AP Biology course which I taught. I was disappointed that many Black male students were not willing to accept the challenge. If any or specific students did enroll in AP Biology, they would often balk and attempt to drop the course.

Through the lens of an oral history, the recorded in-depth interview (Ritchie, 2003; Shopes, 2002; Yow, 1994) in this qualitative study examined six self-identified African American males who enrolled in this researcher's Advanced Placement Biology course. The oral histories of these students were paramount in understanding the ecological factors contributing to their academic journey during and after high school. The purpose of this academic investigation, therefore, was to inform the related reasons why self-identified African American males are underrepresented in Honors and Advanced Placement science courses. The following historical artifacts which included articles, statistics, and literature demonstrate that American youth, in particular African American male students, are being underserved and insufficiently challenged in K-12 school settings. Additionally, African American male students are unable to access both college and careers in science.

The Nation's Report Card: Valerie Strauss's Perspective

The following is a written history artifact of *The Nation's Report Card: Science 2009*, as published in the *Washington Post*. The intention of this artifact was to highlight staggeringly low science scores of the United States.

What is surprising about the newly released science scores in the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, commonly known as the nation's report card, is that anybody is surprised that they were, on average, so low.

First some basics on the test and the results:

Who: National and state samples of 156,500 fourth-graders and 151,100 eighth-graders, and a national sample of 11,100 twelfth-graders.

What: Questions designed to measure their knowledge and abilities in physical science, life science, and Earth and space sciences.

Results:

- 34% of fourth graders, 30% of eighth graders and 21% of 12th graders performed at or above the proficient level, demonstrating competency on challenging subject matter.
- 72% of fourth graders, 63% of eighth graders and 60% of 12th graders performed at or above the basic level in science in 2009, demonstrating partial mastery of the knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work in the subject.
- Results varied for students of different racial and ethnic groups. In grades 4 and 8, White students had higher average scores than other racial and ethnic groups, and Asian-Pacific Islander students scored higher than Black, Hispanic, and American Indian-Alaska native students. In grade 12, there was no significant difference in scores for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students, and both groups scored higher on average than other racial and ethnic groups.
- Male students scored higher on average than female students in all three grades.
- Scores differed based on the location of the schools. In grades 4 and 8, students attending schools in cities scored lower on average than students in schools in other locations. In grade 12, the average score for students in city schools was lower than that for students in suburban schools but was not significantly different from the scores for students in towns and rural areas.

. . . Why better results were expected is a real question.

Over the past decade, the accountability system of No Child Left Behind has pushed schools to focus on reading and math because those were the subjects on which students were tested and the results used to grade schools and teachers. That results in less time for other subjects, including science.

No Child Left Behind did require that science be annually assessed in various grades starting in 2007-08, but the entire testing regime came under criticism when it became obvious that states were lowering standards to ensure higher test scores.

Over the past decade, schools have cut funding for teacher training and resources for science classes. Although some programs have recognized that science learning demands a hands-on approach, many teachers don't get enough material support to do that well. States have science standards, but many are not

well drawn, and a significant percentage of science teachers have no training in the field.

Considering all of this, what would have been surprising is if the NAEP science scores weren't low. (Strauss, 2011)

Who Is Steering the Course of Science?: Plight of the Unrepresented in Science

Objectivity is the foundation of scientific work. The objective scientist is looked upon as the ideal to strive for. At least, that is the popular conception of the ideal scientist. (Armstrong, 1979, p. 423)

Science has value and bias in which the “social psychological and political forces shape individuals’ perceptions of the facts – both among those involved in creation of scientific knowledge and among those who consume it” (Morton, Haslam, Postmes, & Ryan, 2006, p. 836). Then, there is a need to consider whose values and biases are defining the field of science. Historically, the science field has been dominated by White males, while women and ethnic minorities have less of an opportunity to make an impact or contribution (Bianchini, Cavazos, & Helms, 2000). Therefore, the field of science is lacking the diverse perspectives of individuals in regards to gender, sexuality, race, and ethnic diversity. Mae Jemison, the first African American female astronaut in 1987, argued, “It is important for scientists to be aware of what our discoveries mean, socially and politically. It's a noble goal that science should be apolitical, acultural, and asocial, but it can't be, because it's done by people who are all those things” (Jamieson, 2011, internet site).

Armstrong (1979) questioned the scientist’s ability to be an objective reporter.

Lemke (1999) built upon the argument that scientists are human, therefore, they cannot separate their biases from their objectivity.

It [science] is a very human activity, full of biases and accidents, driven by egos and budgets, competitive and sometimes venal, tightly locked into the agendas of

larger institutions and social movements: a wonderful and terrible human comedy, like every other part of life. (Languages and Concepts in Science section, para. 9)

Lemke's human comedy ironically described scientists who cannot completely detach their identities. These identities include race, gender, class, or sexuality of scientists who are unable to exclude their norms and values in order to employ neutrality and impartiality (Morton et al., 2006) as they define scientific knowledge. Ultimately, these biased individuals comprise institutions and social movements that steer the course of science.

Unfortunately, these institutions of higher education with locked agendas can hinder the opportunities for underrepresented students in the field of science. The agenda to have students in science but will not create opportunities to scaffold the skills needed to access science will have implications on science education at all levels as students progress through their educational journey. The science communities must enable educators to cultivate and engage students of poverty and minority backgrounds to develop their interest in science. Therefore, institutions of higher education need to explore the roads leading to basic and enriched opportunities in science by creating partnerships with urban public schools that enroll these students who are underrepresented in science. The potential to expose a diverse population of students to science and the scientific process is cultivated by their participation in science fairs: students create a question, test an idea, evaluate evidence — and, perhaps, discover how difficult it can be to find an answer (Harmon, 2011).

The following oral history narrative highlights the potential relationship between a university and an urban public school district. The researcher chose to use pseudonyms

for the university and the urban public school district in this oral history narrative to assure confidentiality and to protect individuals in “their jobs from retribution” (Ritchie, 2003, p.126).

In Spring 2009, the Dean of the College of Engineering and Polymer Science at The JKelly University was discussing possible partnerships with the local urban public school district. The distribution of funding from a specific grant became a topic of conversation; however, the money was already earmarked toward the regional District V Science Fair sponsored by The JKelly University. The Dean was not interested in allocating funds to progress the local urban public school district’s science fair. Ironically, the local urban public school science fair is the prerequisite to the regional District V Science Fair at The JKelly University. Lack of a partnership between the university and local school district did not affect the student participation in the local science fair in January of 2010. Subsequently, one third of the participants of the regional District V science fair in March of 2010 were from the local urban science fair.

The narrative illustrated that science does not operate in a sterile and pure unbiased environment, but rather, science is influenced by advocacy, agendas, and politics. “Perhaps there is an analogy between selling theories and selling other items like insurance and used cars. Successful salesmen use advocacy with these products also” (Armstrong, 1979, p. 427). Despite the shortcomings of the larger institution’s agenda, the urban school district’s representative was able to advocate for students’ involvement in science fairs. This advocacy led to the increased participation of students who otherwise would not participate in science.

African American Journey to Become a Participant in Science: Questionable

Success

When I'm asked about the relevance to Black people of what I do, I take that as an affront. It presupposes that Black people have never been involved in exploring the heavens, but this is not so. Ancient African empires -- Mali, Songhai, Egypt -- had scientists, astronomers. The fact is that space and its resources belong to all

of us, not to any one group. (Mae Jamison, First Female African American astronaut in 1987)

The first step to understanding this research begins with examining the low participation in science of underrepresented populations. The challenges begin at birth with unwed mothers of any race; in which their children tend to perform poorly in school, go to prison, use drugs, are economically disadvantaged as adults, and have their own children out of wedlock (Washington, 2010). In 2008, 41% of children were born to unwed mothers in the United States and of that rate 72% were Blacks, 66% were Native American, 53% were Hispanics, 29% were Whites, and 17% were Asians (Washington, 2010). The underrepresented populations which consist of Blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics face many challenges before and after entering the educational system.

At the outset of entering the American educational system, NAEP testing scores illustrated that younger White, Black, and Hispanic students are making the most progress in science compared to their contemporaries in middle and high school (*The Nation's Report Card: Science*, 2005). Furthermore, the achievement gap in fourth grade science between White and their Black and Hispanic peers narrowed by 4 points and 8 points, respectively. The eighth grade White, Black, and Hispanic students' science achievement gap flat lined or did not change. However, during this same time period the NAEP testing scores demonstrated the gap widened between White and Black 12th graders but showed no change among the Hispanic peers.

This widening of the achievement gap in science between White and Black students in the 12th grade is a predictor of the underrepresentation in both the fields of science and engineering. Black students are not pursuing education in science or

engineering; therefore, they are not employed in those fields. According to the report *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering* (2009), the following statistics highlight issues for underrepresented students who entered the science and engineering field:

- Blacks were 7% or less of postsecondary teachers, engineers, engineering technologists and technicians, and mathematical and computer scientists.
- Blacks represented 6% of physicians but were 15% of health technologists and technicians.
- One-third of Black science and engineering (S & E) doctorate holders were employed in four-year colleges and universities, compared with 42% of Hispanic and 44% of White S&E doctorate holders employed in doctorate granting universities with very high research activity.
- Black S&E doctorate holders employed in four-year colleges and universities were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be employed in master's granting colleges and universities than research universities.
- Underrepresented minorities (Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians/other Pacific Islanders) were 10% of all scientists and engineers in business or industry in 2006.

Despite the growing numbers of minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Medicine (STEMM), there are still skeptics questioning the quality of the student's education. The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UM-BC), has a history of producing more minority scientists than any predominantly White institution in the country (Staples, 2010). During an interview with New York Times, Mr. Hrabowski, president of UM-BC, stated that he is met with skepticism from other educators in regards to the large numbers of high-performing minority students engaged in advanced science research (Staples, 2010). Mr. Hrabowski's interview underlined society's

negative views towards minority students in science; these negative perceptions are present throughout the educational field.

On international science tests the United States was once the world's leader in science education (Staples, 2010); however, it is now ranked 21 out of 30 developed nations in terms of student performance (TIMMS, 2009). Additionally, the U.S. is ranked 27th in the percentage of students who graduate from college with degrees in the natural sciences and in engineering (Staples, 2010; TIMMS, 2009). These statistics reveal that fewer minority candidates are able to compete in STEM-related fields in the private sector, the public sector, or the academic sector. Minorities who are STEM deficient as participants in the science enterprise and lack scientific literacy will less likely access employment and future technologies.

United States' scientific community slipped into a black hole in terms of progress and accomplishments in comparison to other developed nations (NAEP 1996, 2005, 2009; TIMMS 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007). The endless black hole took the African American students onto a journey that contains many obstacles and challenges (NAEP 1996, 2005, 2009; TIMMS 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007). The challenges potentially begin with a large number of African American students who are disadvantaged at birth. The obstacles and challenges continue with questioning the quality of science education and subsequently the opportunities for science careers. There is a necessity to examine the symbolism of lynching African American students in the science classroom.

Lynching of School Classrooms

Strange Fruit

*Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.
Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh!
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.*

Written by Abel Meeropol, 1937

The 1939 lyrics of the song *Strange Fruit* sung by Billy Holiday poetically describe the brutality of lynching. While the practice of lynching does not exist in its historic form at the present, lynching is still metaphorically prevalent in the classroom. The classroom lynching of African American students is illustrated in the following United States statistics as described by Wynn (2007):

- Black students, while representing only 17% of public school students, account for 32% of suspensions and 30% of expulsions. In 1999, 35% of all Black students in grades 7-12 had been suspended or expelled from school. The rate was 20% for Hispanics and 15% for Whites.
- Black children are labeled “mentally retarded” nearly 300% more than White children, and only 8.4% of Black males are identified and enrolled in gifted and talented classes.
- Only 30% of Black high school students take advanced mathematics courses.
- Only 27% of Black high school students take advanced English.
- Only 12% of Black high school students take science classes as high as chemistry and physics.
- Only 5% of Black high school students take a fourth year of a foreign language with only 2% taking an AP foreign language course.

- Black students take AP exams at a rate of 53 per 1,000 students. The rate for Hispanic students is 115 per 1,000 and for White students it is 185 per 1,000.
- The average ACT score for Black students is 16.9; for White students it is nearly 30% higher at 21.8. (pp. 5-6)

The classroom lynching has consequences. Black males in their early 30s are twice as likely to have prison records (22%) than bachelor's degrees (12%).

- A Black male born in 1991 has a 29% chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life. The figure for Hispanic males is 16%, and for White males is 4%.
- Black males are imprisoned at a rate of 3,405 per 100,000 (3.4%); Hispanics at a rate of 1,231 per 100,000 (1.2%); and Whites at a rate of 465 per 100,000 (0.465%). (Wynn, 2007, pp. 5-6)

Furthermore, African American male students are daily suffering in an area of education that translates into few economic opportunities. Although educational sociologists do have powerful systemic causes for rationale which include such things as racist views of intelligence, school segregation, biased teacher expectations, teacher transfer policies in poor schools, biased curricular content, and teaching methods are targeted at "ideal" pupils who happen to be White middle class. All of these serve to reproduce educational inequality along racial and class lines. The literature and statistical numbers depict a discouraging pathway for African American males. However, the literature does not lend voice to those individuals impacted by these alarming numbers. This study utilized oral history as a methodology providing a microphone for the voices of six self-identified African American males. The collective voices of these six males may uncase the obstacles and challenges faced in their science classroom.

Research Approach

Recounting the experiences of everyday life and making sense of that experience, narrators turn history inside out, demanding to be understood as purposeful actors in the past, talking about their lives in ways that do not easily fit into preexisting categories of analysis.
(Shopes, 2002, p .4)

This Is an Oral History

The purposeful actors being studied in this research were six self-identified African American males. The actors' experiences were the foundation upon which this study was constructed. The oral histories of these six self-identified African American males may not fit easily into the preexisting "endangered species" category argued by Gibbs (1988) or the existing literature and statistics. The purpose of this research was to recount, to make sense, to find patterns of factors surrounding these six self-identified African American males' past experience in two Advanced Placement Biology courses. Three of the informants were classmates during the 2003-2004 school year, while the other three informants were classmates during the 2005-2006 school year.

Oral history has been a powerful and insightful research tool (Shopes, 2010, pp. 2-3). A prominent example of an oral history is the *Foxfire* (1966) magazine which led to publication of the *Foxfire* book (1972). This book is a compilation of interviews of community members about their folklore, arts and crafts, local history, and traditions which were conducted by students, inspired by their English teacher at a rural Georgia high school (Ritchie, 1997). The Foxfire project empowered the teacher, students, and community to engage in authentic editing, illustrations, and publications of oral history. Oral history interviews have become an effective and powerful foundation for mainstream media including plays, radio broadcasts, and television documentaries

(Ritchie, 1997). The radio program, *This American Life*, (National Public Radio, 2010, aired weekly) provided an avenue for ordinary people to speak about their life journeys as informants of oral histories. The powerful oral history from survivors of the Holocaust (Zusman, 2010), Hurricane Katrina (Janesick, 2010) and the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Janesick, 2010) have allowed ordinary people the avenue to express their stories. The survivors' stories are vital to enrich the understanding of these events.

Oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be historical by significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the conversation takes the form of an interview, in which one person – interviewer - asks questions of another person -variously referred to as the interviewee or narrator - oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue. (Shopes, 2002, pp. 2-3)

Oral history provides an insight not only into the lives of people in the elite society, but also into the everyday life of ordinary people in communities that do not attract scholarly readers' attention. Oral history, therefore, is “more popular and more pervasive, both as a research tool and as pedagogical technique” (Howard, 2006, p. 14). This research was an oral history discovering the story underneath the story of six self-identified African American males. The goal was to understand the factors that affected the pursuit and completion of an Advance Placement Biology course in an urban public high school.

Ecology of the Study

The following historical artifacts established the context of the research setting in which the six African American males attended school. These historical artifacts are composed of local newspaper articles, an editorial response, and internet responses from the community at large. These articles housed within this research were originally

published in the *Akron Beacon Journal* newspaper. The first artifact highlights the findings of an *U.S. News and World Report* article which described the criteria for the nine high schools that were ranked.

**9 SCHOOLS MAKE LIST IN MAGAZINE AURORA,
HOOVER, REVERE, HUDSON GET SILVER RATING**

December 2, 2007

Section: B

Page: B1

Beacon Journal staff report

Nine local high schools earned a spot in *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking of America's Best High Schools. No local schools reached gold status among the top 100 high schools in the country, but Aurora, Hoover, Hudson and Revere high schools earned silver ratings, while Akron North, Dalton, Louisville, Woodridge and Wooster high schools were awarded bronze. *U.S. News* awarded 505 silver and bronze rankings nationwide. Of the 100 gold rankings, four Ohio high schools were included: Chagrin Falls, Indian Hill, Wyoming and Walnut Hills.

In its first ranking of high schools, the magazine said the methodology was "based on the key principles that a great high school must serve all its students well, not just those who are bound for college." State proficiency standards were used as benchmarks for the rankings, as well as each school's ability to prepare students for college-level work.

Only about one in eight of the schools on the list serves a student body that is more than 50 percent low income, and only about one in five has a majority of nonwhite students. Also, about one in five ranked schools select students based on academic merit, "something that obviously boosts the chances of meeting the criteria," the magazine said.

Thomas Jefferson High School in Alexandria, Va., ranked as the nation's best high school.

For the full report, go online to

<http://www.usnews.com/sections/education/high-schools/index.html>.

The second artifact is a reflective editorial from Mr. Larry Weigle, the principal of Akron North High School, who outlined how the school overcame the barriers that were challenging this urban high school.

Bold enough to be North High School

By Larry Weigle

Published on Friday, Jan 18, 2008

As was reported in the Beacon Journal, the Dec. 10 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, ranking America's best high schools, awarded a bronze rating to Akron's North High School.

North's recognition is first and foremost a tribute to the students who performed so well. It is also a tribute to the ingenuity, work ethic and students-first outlook of North teachers.

U.S. News' Web site says its school ratings are "based on the key principles that a great high school must serve all its students well, not just those who are bound for college, and that it must be able to produce measurable academic outcomes that show the school is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators."

Understanding a bit about what North has done gives some perspective to what *U.S. News* saw.

In some sense, this all began in April 2002, when the North faculty and staff met in a daylong session to ponder the future.

At the time, new legal mandates made the upcoming school year seem much like an oncoming freight train, with the school staff tied to the tracks like some innocent soul in a melodrama.

The more rigorous Ohio Graduation Test was replacing the Ohio Proficiency Test. The new Ohio Academic Content Standards would change what was to be taught. The federal No Child Left Behind law was telling staff that all students must meet the standards. Rich or poor, black or white, abled or disabled, all students were required to meet the higher standards or, at a minimum, make significant progress toward meeting them.

Thoughts and feeling about the merits of the laws that were bearing down on North were set aside, and, as a group, the North staff focused on how to meet them.

Several guiding principles were identified, and the logic was inescapable: All students must be exposed to the rigorous content they are expected to learn

and upon which they would be tested. Only upper-level, and in some cases, Honors-level courses presented the content with enough rigor to allow students to meet the standards. Therefore, all students must be enrolled in a rigorous curriculum.

By the end of that day in 2002, the North staff had abandoned the timeworn and time-tested, preconceived notion that a student should be placed in classes based on past performance, handicap, behavior and the like. It was decided that North would treat each student as capable of the best work and expect nothing less.

In the fall of 2002, the lofty notions from the previous April were put into action. All ninth-grade students were required to take Honors English and social studies. A math course that allowed students to earn both Algebra I and Geometry credits in a single year was begun. Ninth-grade science teachers moved to 100-minute class periods to allow students the thinking time needed to draw inferences and complete experiments.

Teachers teamed together. Regular teachers, those well-versed in subject matter, and special-education teachers, those with expertise in presenting material to students for whom learning is more challenging, could work together. The teaming also allowed students to be frequently regrouped for enrichment and remedial instruction as needed.

North ended the first semester before the December holiday break and used that time to allow counselors to schedule restart classes for students who were failing a course.

Over the next three years, North expanded on its April 2002 ideas by requiring more rigorous courses for upperclass students as well as freshmen.

To garner more parent involvement, North took its parent conference programs off-campus and into the community. Student-led parent conferences were tried.

A no-nonsense discipline plan was developed that recognized disruption of learning as the cardinal offense, because it was an attack on North's primary mission. Several models for peer mentoring were tried.

Students were required to earn a C or better to earn credit for ninth-grade English and Algebra I. These courses are the foundation upon which other high school courses rest, so it made no sense to continue building on a substandard foundation.

The physical education teacher moved from the traditional gym class to a

course on personal fitness and wellness.

To minimize the loss of instructional time, North moved to four activity days a year rather than having classes continually disrupted by assemblies, class meetings and the like.

The school even began its fire drills during class changes, so the continuity of instruction would not be compromised. Besides, anyone can do a fire drill marching from a classroom under a teacher's direction; having drills at unstructured times teaches students and staff to think on their feet in an emergency.

In Ohio, state testing began in the early 1990s, but it was not until the 2002-2003 school year that the state started using test scores to label schools. In 2001-2002, individual schools were not labeled by the Ohio Department of Education, but, if they had been, North likely would have fallen on the lowest rung: "academic emergency."

After one year of the new plan, North rose to "academic watch." The next year, the school earned "continuous improvement" status. An "effective" rating came in 2004-2005. In 2005-2006, North remained "effective," but moved higher within that rank, getting within striking distance of an "excellent" rating. In addition, the state scores revealed that North students across the board were making progress regardless of race, handicap or economic status.

U.S. News analyzed 18,790 public high schools in 40 states using state test data from the 2005-2006 school year. North's bronze rating was well-earned.

North may have some warts, and, to be sure, its well-laid plans did not work perfectly.

But there is no denying that North took chances, explored new ground and made student learning the central concern.

Mr. Weigle's editorial prompted 75 comments that posted in the reader response section of ohio.com that accompanied the article. These 75 comments are presented *verbatim* as an artifact to set the tone of discourse and to understand the challenges from the community at large.

Akron, OH**Bold enough to be North High School**

As was reported in the Beacon Journal, the Dec. 10 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, ranking America's best high schools, awarded a bronze rating to Akron's North High School.

[Read All 75 Comments](#)

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ANON #1 - Jan 18, 2008
Canton, OH *Congrats to North High...my alma mater. Great to see an award for a city school.*

ANONYMOUS #2 - Jan 18, 2008
Akron, OH *congratulations to North...now when is the violence go end there*

Yeah Right
north
Akron, OH #3 - Jan 18, 2008
Somebody fudged the books on this one because that is a school full of thugs and punks, everyday that sorry school lets out it looks like the local prison just released it's inmates. You know most of their YBM's will dropout and become criminals bound for a life in and out of prision. Just look what's been going on recently in Akron, YBM's are robbing everyone and everything they can!!! This story is 100% BS, I don't buy it for a second, nice try though...

Viking Parent
Akron, OH #4 Jan 18, 2008
Yeah right north wrote:
Somebody fudged the books on this one because that is a school full of thugs and punks, everyday that sorry school lets out it looks like the local prison just released it's inmates. You know most of their YBM's will dropout and become criminals bound for a life in and out of prision. Just look what's been going on recently in Akron, YBM's are robbing everyone and everything they can!!! This story is 100% BS, I don't buy it for a second, nice try though...

Couldn't disagree with you more, but alas, you will have your misguided opinion regardless. Because you see 20-30 thug like characters outside of the building you immediately dismiss the remaining 800+ students that are working hard.

Typical knee-jerk reaction. I am very proud of North High School for their accomplishments. Go Vikes!

FTC #5 Jan 18, 2008
Columbus, OH *Good on North High School, teachers and students alike!*

ANON #6 Jan 18, 2008
Canton, OH Yeah right north wrote:
Somebody fudged the books on this one because that is a school full of thugs and punks, everyday that sorry school lets out it looks like the local prison just released it's inmates. You know most of their YBM's will dropout and become criminals bound for a life in and out of prison. Just look what's been going on recently in Akron, YBM's are robbing everyone and everything they can!!! This story is 100% BS, I don't buy it for a second, nice try though...

Check for yourself: <http://www.usnews.com/listings/high-schools/o...>

Akron Citizen #7 Jan 18, 2008
Cleveland, OH *Congratulations North High!!! 1984 graduate here.*

Cloverine #8 Jan 18, 2008
Fleetwood Yeah right north wrote:
Stow, OH Somebody fudged the books on this one because that is a school full of thugs and punks, everyday that sorry school lets out it looks like the local prison just released it's inmates. You know most of their YBM's will dropout and become criminals bound for a life in and out of prison. Just look what's been going on recently in Akron, YBM's are robbing everyone and everything they can!!! This story is 100% BS, I don't buy it for a second, nice try though...

My Gloomy Friend,

If you know anything about how schools are rated, you will know that these numbers cannot be fudged. I regret that your life experiences apparently deprived you of the chance to interact with people who are from a different cultural background from yourself. That being the case, I readily excuse your truly ignorant characterization of young Black males.

Hey #9 Jan 18, 2008

Danville, PA
I goes to NorF
Akron, Oh

Way to go North High School...keep up the good work
#10 Jan 18, 2008
Misguided? Please explain ALL the recent ROBBERIES, RAPES, CARJACKINGS and so on that YOUNG B L A C K MALES are committing EVERDAY in AKRON!! Misguided, what a JOKE!!! YBM's are the scourge of this planet!!!

I goes to NorF
Akron, Oh

#11 Jan 18, 2008
Akron has the EBONIC PLAGUE! YBM's are robbing and raping everywhere in Akron! The Ghetto-tax culture (gangstas and thugs) are destroying Akron and causing fear and prejudice all over the place! NorF high is a joke, a LIE! Somebody somewhere is lying, there's NO WAY that school could go from thug infested on the verge of an academic emergency to nationally hailed for excellence!!! BS!

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Akron, OH

#12 Jan 18, 2008
I goes to NorF wrote:
Misguided? Please explain ALL the recent ROBBERIES, RAPES, CARJACKINGS and so on that YOUNG B L A C K MALES are committing EVERDAY in AKRON!!! Misguided, what a JOKE!!! YBM's are the scourge of this planet!!!
I can only assume that your exposure to young Black males has be limited to ignorant stereotypes. The vast majority of young Black males I know are responsible and productive. Having worked in urban schools for 35 years, I can assure you that you are simply wrong.

leave town now
AOL

#13 Jan 18, 2008
Hey the Don (holy be thy name) says the city is great, if north won the award what does that tell you about the rest of tha Akron schools. what a joke. nobody wants to drive by that school when it is letting out. in the summer cars role up their windows and hide their purses.

Nadine
DeSimone
Barberton, OH

#14 Jan 19, 2008
Way to go my alma mater!! I believe that there has always been something special about North and the people of North Hill...I couldn't have had a better experience then my days at North as a teenager. Having recently attended my 20 year reunion I was made aware of the special bound that we share. Many of my classmates are teachers at North today and I feel that it is their connection to the school and the community that makes this school exceptional...this proves my theory...you guys are amazing and I respect you so much for your commitment!! I celebrate this victory with you!!

Barry G
Akron, OH #15 Jan 19, 2008
I think it's a great plan and hope the continued success. I am a graduate of North and thought my education was great. Of course that was 20+ years ago. Times are different. Glad to see the school on a come back!

Susan
Barberton, OH #16 Jan 19, 2008
I am so glad that Larry wrote the article explaining WHY North High was listed among the best high schools. It has been mistakenly stated that this was due to the principal that replaced Mr. Weigle upon his retirement. The last class lucky enough to be lead by the wisdom of this intelligent, caring gentleman was 2005-2006.

In the fall of 2006, a new principal took over and threw out all the changes that had brought North a bronze rating - now the school is on the decline. Grade are down, absences are up ... what a shame. Wouldn't it be nice to see Mrs. Veasley removed and Mr. Weigle brought back?

Profoundly
Ignorant
Akron, OH #17 Jan 19, 2008
This is simply a LIE. YOU KNOW BETTER CLOVERINE!!! STOP being politically correct! It's people like you that tolerate our society to be destroyed and terrorized by these THUGS! Are you telling me that the CRIME WAVE in Akron recently by YBM's is not true? All made up? WISE UP WOMAN

resident of
Springfield
Akron, OH #18 Jan 19, 2008
I goes to NorF wrote:
Akron has the EBONIC PLAGUE! YBM's are robbing and raping everywhere in Akron! The Ghetto-tax culture (gangstas and thugs) are destroying Akron and causing fear and prejudice all over the place! NorF high is a joke, a LIE! Somebody somewhere is lying, there's NO WAY that school could go from thug infested on the verge of an academic emergency to nationally hailed for excellence!!!
BS!

Hey Truth, another name?????

Anonymous
Teacher
Stow, OH #19 Jan 19, 2008
Susan, you said it so well. The faculty at North greatly misses the leadership Mr. Weigle provided. Not only do the teachers miss Weigle, but students who had the good fortune to know him miss him as well.

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Stow, OH

#20 Jan 19, 2008

Profoundly ignorant wrote:

This is simply a LIE. YOU KNOW BETTER CLOVERINE!!!

STOP being politically correct! It's people like you that tolerate our society to be destroyed and terrorized by these THUGS! Are you telling me that the CRIME WAVE in Akron recently by YBM's is not true? All made up? WISE UP WOMAN!

I suppose that we will just have to disagree. In reality, people like you who characterize whole segments of the population with sweeping statements concern me more than the young Black males that concern you. I stand by what I said. In my experience the vast majority of young Black males are productive and responsible. I am not blind to facts and know that problems exist but see no basis for negatively characterizing all young Black males. Thank you for responding to my posts. It is good for those who disagree to engage in some kind of dialogue. One thing you wrote made me laugh and that was you thinking I am "politically correct". If you knew me, you would take that one back. At my age, chances of my "wising up" are pretty slim.

Tate Hudson
Saint Albans,
WV

#22 Jan 20, 2008

Wow! The staff and the students deserve a great cheer, as this recognition is evidence.

Ginny Nix
Sandyville, OH

#23 Jan 21, 2008

Well it sounds as if these comments are discussing two different things. The first real item deserving comment is the plan put into motion to improve overall academic performance. I think the measures taken are well-thought and well executed and way to go -hell yeah etc. The second and slightly off subject is the crime problem in Akron. It wasn't as bad when I was there as it has become. I think it's sad and those who create such a dangerous and violent atmosphere are ruining any positive regard for YBMs. The ones doing these awful things don't represent every YBM and that is important to remember.

True Viking Fan
Akron, OH

#27 Jan 27, 2008

ANONYMOUS wrote:

congratulations to North...now when is the violence go end there
What violence?

Viking Mom
Akron, OH

#28 Jan 27, 2008

Yeah right north wrote:

Somebody fudged the books on this one because that is a school full of thugs and punks, everyday that sorry school lets out it looks like the local prison just released it's inmates. You know most of their YBM's will dropout and become criminals bound for a life in and out of prison. Just look what's been going on recently in Akron, YBM's are robbing everyone and everything they can!!! This story is 100% BS, I don't buy it for a second, nice try though...

Try getting your facts straight before making such an untrue statement. We cannot speak for anyone but the students at North. Why don't you come and visit the High School to see for yourself or are you the typical big mouth who talks trash and wind up looking like an a\$\$ once proven WRONG!!

Viking Mom
Akron, OH

#29 Jan 27, 2008

I goes to NorF wrote:

Misguided?

Please explain ALL the recent ROBBERIES, RAPES, CARJACKINGS and so on that YOUNG B L A C K MALES are committing EVERDAY in AKRON!!!

Misguided, what a JOKE!!!

YBM's are the scourge of this planet!!!

But what does that have to do with North High School! They were recognized for academic achievement. What goes on outside of the school doesn't have anything to do with inside of the school. Those teachers and students worked very hard to reach this goal and people like you is why the world is so messed up all the smoke that comes out of your mouth is racist. That school brought their test scores up and that's a tremendous accomplishment. Wake up jerk and get a life!!!!

Denise
Akron, OH

#30 Jan 27, 2008

Hostile takeover wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.
BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family
against these savage thugs in Akron.
If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them
in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!
F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

*Nothing but hate and racial slurs from your mouth! Not worth the
comment because I already gave it to God but the Devli is in your
vocabulary.*

Denise
Akron, OH

#31 Jan 27, 2008
Devil

John
Akron, OH

#32 Jan 27, 2008
Hostile takeover wrote:
MOST young Black males are criminals!
The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.
They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home
break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.
The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.
They ALL butcher our language.
BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family
against these savage thugs in Akron.
If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them
in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!
F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

*You say this nonsense on every issue! So sad! Be bold enough to say the
N word coward!*

North Dad
Akron, OH

#33 Jan 27, 2008
Profoundly ignorant wrote:
This is simply a LIE.
YOU KNOW BETTER CLOVERINE!!! STOP being politically correct!
It's people like you that tolerate our society to be destroyed and
terrorized by these THUGS! Are you telling me that the CRIME WAVE
in Akron recently by YBM's is not true? All made up? WISE UP
WOMAN!

Whats going on with all the negativity regarding North High School and Black males in Akron. North is being congratulated for their test scores but you continue bashing young Black males. That's a different issue so stop bashing them on this forum and give some joy to the teachers and students who have worked hard over the years.

AOL TRUTH
Akron, OH

#35 Jan 27, 2008

No hood tax wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals! The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs. They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc. The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms. They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron. If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong! F-ing N@##\$%^!!! NORF high is a big LIE!!!

Stop BS-ing people, we all know what's really going on at that THUG factory!!! The above brought to you by the Truth from Akron.

GIVE IT A
REST
Akron, OH

#38 Jan 27, 2008

No hood tax wrote:

The TRUTH is my hero!

He is the only one who tells it like it REALLY is...

So you are your own hero??

John
Akron, OH

#40 Jan 29, 2008

No hood tax wrote:

Tell me something... Why do you REFUSE to say what's wrong with Akron?

Why won't you just come out and call a spade a spade? YBM's are comitting crimes as if there were no tomorrow, and some of you people just either won't say it or pretend it is not happening! Are you afraid you'll be called racist for pointing out the facts??? BS, 100% BS!!! Anyone who isn't fed up with THUGGERY in Akron and it's MAIN CAUSE (YBM's) is living a lie!

Sure there are White, Latino, and Asian thugs too but we all know YBM's are BY FAR the worst!

This has nothing to do with young Black males this has everything to do with North High School staff and students being recognized in US News for their academics and accomplishments. You do know how to read don't you. Get off of the Akron crime rate and stop bashing the Black teens because you never know who you'll need one day. Will you, go to another forum to spread your hate.

Appraisit
Akron, OH

#41 Jan 29, 2008

Cloverine Fleetwood wrote:

I suppose that we will just have to disagree. In reality, people like you who characterize whole segments of the population with sweeping statements concern me more that the young Black males that concern you. I stand by what I said. In my experience the vast majority of young Black males are productive and responsible. I am not blind to facts and know that problems exist but see no basis for negatively characterizing all young Black males. Thank you for responding to my posts. It is good for those who disagree to engage in some kind of dialogue. One thing you wrote made me laugh and that was you thinking I am "politically correct". If you knew me, you would take that one back. At my age, chances of my "wising up" are pretty slim.

Excellent response....someone who is willing to look beyond the headlines....unfortunately the knuckleheads seem to make the most noise....ranting & raving their self serving view of this world !

The Real Truth
Akron, OH

#42 Jan 29, 2008

No hood tax wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals! The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs. They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language. BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong! F-ing

N@##\$%^!!!

NORF high is a big LIE!!! Stop BS-ing people, we all know what's really going on at that THUG factory!!!

Stop your punk a\$\$ whining. Why don't you call Attorney Edward P. Markovich and maybe the two of you can sit down together and discuss your punk a\$\$ issues. NO MORE WHITE TRASH TAX!!! DARN PISS POOR A\$\$ COWARDS!!!!

Appraisit
Akron, OH

#43 Jan 29, 2008

Profoundly ignorant wrote:

Well, I used to live in Stow and I can tell you that when the "projects" were established by Giant Eagle and the other ones on Portage path were built that there became an instant increase in 911 calls, robberies, break ins, car thefts you name it!

Live an illusion all you want Fleetwood, but here in Akron we HAVE A PROBLEM! YBM's are robbing pizza delivery drivers, pizza shops, they're robbing and beating people who are just out for a walk, they are carjacking people, breaking into houses, beating kids up at school, disrupting classes and on and on and on!

My Aunt who does substitute teaching said she will NEVER again teach at an APS school, she has been attacked, harrassed, mocked, things thrown at her, threatend and cursed at. So, as you can CLEARLY see I disagree with you emphatically about YBM's and the whole thug culture! I can't believe you would say that most YBM's are not a problem. You live in a dream world. Just wait till it happens to you, being robbed or carjacked , raped or beaten. Then we'll see how much you sing thier praises!

You sir are an ignoramusand you verify it by including the word "most" when referring to YBM, is this comment based on your vast personal experience directly with "all" YBM, and then if not ...how could you possibly use the term " most" ...I suspect you are an enraged, under-educated idiot (read Stow-billy)with a very short dic... who can't think nor comprehend anything beyond your own little shrunken brain....the world needs ditch diggers as well !

Michelle
Akron, OH

#44 Jan 29, 2008

John wrote:

This has nothing to do with young Black males this has everything to do with North High School staff and students being recognized in US News for their academics and accomplishments. You do know how to read don't you. Get off of the Akron crime rate and stop bashing the Black

teens because you never know who you'll need one day. Will you, go to another forum to spread your hate.

Well put. To bad that they continue to sterotype all Black youths even the ones who are striving for excellence and are doing well in/out of school. Good job North High School.

Michelle
Akron, OH

#45 Jan 29, 2008

Hostile Takeover and No hood tax are the same people.

HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

You're an idiot. HA!HA!HA!What a true coward what are you afraid to say your real name!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

NO MORE WHITE COWARD TAX OR THUGS ON THIS COMMENT FORUM!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

THE TRUTH IS
Akron, OH

#48 Jan 30, 2008

Appraise my balls ho wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

JEALOUS, he couldn't make it as a thug.

Really
Canton, OH

#50 Jan 30, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Stupid NIGLUVR Michelle wrote:

You obviously like YBM's...

The rest of us see them for exactly what they really are.

THUGS, criminals, savages!

You can kiss the behind of the gangsta thug culture all you want but REAL white guys look at you and realize you have the EBONIC PLAGUE...

Pull the trigger and shoot that N@##\$%!!!

Really
Canton, OH

#51 Jan 30, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Akron EBONIC PLAGUE wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

(Keep sucking thugs off NIGLUVR MICHELLE aka WHITE TRASH HOEBAG)

Really
Canton, OH

#53 Jan 30, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

REALLY you suck wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!
F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#55 Jan 31, 2008
Stupid NIGLUVR Michelle wrote:
You obviously like YBM's...
The rest of us see them for exactly what they really are.
THUGS, criminals, savages!
You can kiss the behind of the gangsta thug culture all you want but REAL White guys look at you and realize you have the EBONIC PLAGUE...
Pull the trigger and shoot that N@##\$%^!!!

Thanks for showing your true racism and ignorance all at once. You talk to darn much and thats why you'll never have good luck. See trash talkers like you are not worth arguing with but you need to keep your hatred toward Black people in your voice box. Are you blind or are you just stupid? Some White young males are thugs, wearing black, white, blue hoodies, and wear baggy pants. A criminal is a criminal black, white, purple or blue, and I can care less as long as they stay away from me. That's what the court is for smartie pants. This topic is pertaining to North High School and their excellent on their test scores and people like you always turn anything positive to a racial issue. You give white people a bad name so bash some where else because believe me buddy I've witnessed both sides and you would be very disappointed is you new what some of our people did and got away with it. Your to dumb to educate and maybe you do know and just don't care. Best wishes and best of luck because you're going to need it with your racist attitude.

Michelle
Akron, OH

#56 Jan 31, 2008
REALLY TRUTHful wrote:
MOST young Black males are criminals!
The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.
They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.
The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.
They ALL butcher our language.
BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family

against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

You have four names now you racist jerk. YOU MAD!!

HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! COWARD HA!HA!HA! I know I want you see you on judgement day, BURN RACIST BURN!!!!!!!!!!!!HA!HA!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#58 Jan 31, 2008

Michelle NIGLUVR wrote:

I'm just telling you how MOST White people feel about your criminal savage THUG Blacks...

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

That's what you get when your YBM's are robbing everything in Akron and carjacking people and breaking in houses!

I wish them ALL dead!

YOU will burn you nappy headed baboon! not me, I'm just pointing out the facts about your savage people and the BS they cause in America.

That proves you're a true coward because you continue using fake names! HA!HA!HA! Stop trying to change the subject. You have alot of hate in you and your blaming Black males for your miserable life. Also, your so called facts are demons within you, so don't be mad because North High School is doing well in school. You're a worthless jerk who probably is a criminal and hiding behind your little computer using fake names make you feel like crap. HA!HA!HA!HA! YOUR A FAKE!!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! Besides, i'm smart enough to know that people are different in every race and I don't stereotype anyone!

John
Akron, OH

#59 Jan 31, 2008

Michelle wrote:

That proves you're a true coward because you continue using fake names! HA!HA!HA! Stop trying to change the subject. You have alot of hate in you and your blaming Black males for your miserable life.

Also, your so called facts are demons within you, so don't be mad because North High School is doing well in school. You're a worthless jerk who probably is a criminal and hiding behind your little computer using fake names make you feel like crap. HA!HA!HA!HA! YOUR A FAKE!!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! Besides, i'm smart enough to know that people are different in every race and I don't sterotype anyone!

Michelle don't argue with him. He is a disgrace to the White community. All of his racist comments are uncalled for and I for one do not agree with him. There is bad in all races not just the Black race. He worthless and there is no point in responding to him.

Denise
Akron, OH

#60 Jan 31, 2008

Michelle NIGLUVR wrote:

I'm just telling you how MOST white people feel about your criminal savage THUG Blacks...

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

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If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

That's what you get when your YBM's are robbing everything in Akron and carjacking people and breaking in houses!

I wish them ALL dead!

YOU will burn you nappy headed baboon! not me, I'm just pointing out the facts about your savage people and the BS they cause in America.

Another racist bites the dust. Such a vulgar mouth and who did you say should go to hell? WOW! You are crazy.

Michelle
Akron, OH

#61 Jan 31, 2008

Michelle NIGLUVR wrote:

I'm just telling you how MOST White people feel about your criminal savage THUG Blacks...

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

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If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

That's what you get when your YBM's are robbing everything in Akron and carjacking people and breaking in houses!

I wish them ALL dead!

YOU will burn you nappy headed baboon! not me, I'm just pointing out the facts about your savage people and the BS they cause in America.

I won't see you on judgement day!

Viking Mom
Akron, OH

#63 Jan 31, 2008

Way to go North High and keep up the good work!

Really
Canton, OH

#64 Jan 31, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Michelle NIGLUVR wrote:

I'm just telling you how MOST White people feel about your criminal savage THUG Blacks...

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They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

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F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

That's what you get when your YBM's are robbing everything in Akron and carjacking people and breaking in houses!
I wish them ALL dead!
YOU will burn you nappy headed baboon! not me, I'm just pointing out the facts about your savage people and the BS they cause in America.

Really
Canton, OH

#65 Jan 31, 2008
This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

REALLY TRUTHful wrote:
MOST young Black males are criminals!
The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.
They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.
The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.
They ALL butcher our language.
BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.
If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!
F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#66 Feb 1, 2008
Really wrote:
This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

I know he is a real coward who spits out fire. He just needs to stop making racist comments. But you cannot teach a dog new tricks.

Really
Canton, OH

#67 Feb 1, 2008

Michelle wrote:

I know he is a real coward who spits out fire. He just needs to stop making racist comments. But you cannot teach a dog new tricks.

No but more people that are aware who is making all these comments, less powerful he becomes. As well, more he posts more he increases the chance of being moderated out.

A smart Ohioian
"What's in a
name?"
Tallmadge, OH

#70 Feb 3, 2008

I currently have a junior at North High School. The current principal is invisible. She hides out everyday and does not follow any set rules. The week after the holiday, a report was made that a student had a gun; instead of following procedures and locking down the building, she ignored the reports and let the boy leave the building. I was appalled to hear she was so irresponsible.

We continually get letters from the school with terrible grammar, signed by Mrs. Veasley....where did she get her degree? Where did APS find her? Do they care who is LEADING their High Schools?

What a bad case of propoganda; ask the parents what we think of the school, we'll give you the truth.

Oh and the dress code - It is breached everyday...same kids, daily. Have follow through or take it off the books.

Akron Schools don't want to hear any complaints against the principals; they are rude and condescending.

I show my displeasure at the polls.

Really
Canton, OH

#71 Feb 3, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Really a NIGLUVR wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.
They ALL butcher our language.
BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family
against these savage thugs in Akron.
If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them
in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!
F-ing N@##\$%^!!!
STOP LYING!!
YOU ALL KNOW HOW NI##\$%^ ARE!!!
F-YOU ALL MOTHER F@#\$%^&!!!
KISS MY GD A%%!!!

Really
Canton, OH

#72 Feb 3, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Michelle eats Black loads wrote:
You NIGLUVIN BI#\$%^!!!
BURN!!!

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Stow, OH

#73 Feb 4, 2008

Really wrote:

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

I cannot imagine how miserable this person must be. The reason he issues these nonesensical attacks on Blacks is because he has the need to create the illusion that someone is occupying a lower rung on the ladder of human existence than him. I would bet that if this fellow ever revealed himself, we would find a man very aware of all his inadequacies. He compensates for his impotence by hiding in cyberspace engaging in a futile attempts to feel better about himself by putting down others. But, it does not work. He goes to bed every night full of self-loathing and wakes up the same way. This fellow is a man to be pitied. His greatest fear is that he will have to continue to live his own life.

Wolverine
Flatfoot
AOL

#74 Feb 4, 2008

Cloverine Fleetwood wrote:

I cannot imagine how miserable this person must be. The reason he issues these nonsensical attacks on Blacks is because he has the need to create the illusion that someone is occupying a lower rung on the ladder of human existence than him. I would bet that if this fellow ever revealed himself, we would find a man very aware of all his inadequacies. He compensates for his impotence by hiding in cyberspace engaging in a futile attempts to feel better about himself by putting down others. But, it does not work. He goes to bed every night full of self-loathing and wakes up the same way. This fellow is a man to be pitied. His greatest fear is that he will have to continue to live his own life. Is that how you see it?

Allow me to enlighten you...

In America we have a serious problem with crime, drugs and violence.

Although african Americans make up a mere 13% of the total population they are responsible for over 55% of the prison population and over 70% of armed robberies in America.

All inner cities in America are dangerous and especially dangerous to people of caucasian decent.

The vast majority of african Americans dwell in the inner cities of America.

Gangs are populated mostly with africans, latinians and asians in that order.

In Akron there has been a rising number of armed robberies and violent crime committed almost exclusively by africans Americans.

The "Thug-life" or "Gangsta" culture is one that breeds savage behavior, crime, drug use and sexual abuse of women.

It's fairly easy to spot someone who represents this culture as they advertise it with thier clothing and mannerisms.

This culture is one that is disrespectful to adults, authority and schools.

Some say that bringing this issue to the forefront is part of some racist agenda.

Being politically correct you would not make mention of these particular statistics or ethnic groups however by not doing so you withhold valuable information to the public that may prevent a crime or a robbery from being committed in the first place.

I am not politically correct...

The TRUTH
Really
Cleveland, OH

#76 Feb 6, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

TRUE PARASITE wrote:

Hey Big Lebowski, are you coming over tonight?

I've got a bottle of wild Irish rose and a bag of pork rinds!

Maybe "REALLY" could come over again too, he was funny the way he pranced around in his pink thong singing "you spin me right round"...

Well I hope you can make it, I have a new toy I ordered off channel 79 last month, it's called the "John Holmes twister" with life like features!

We can't put it in the water this time though ok?

Miss you love!

If you can, please stop at CVS and pick up some more "KY warming liquid" alright?

I'll take a king sized snickers too!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#77 Feb 6, 2008

Michelle eats black loads wrote:

You NIGLUVIN BI#\$%!!!

BURN!!!

You cannot handle a Black person because we all know what you like sweetie and I'm sure that know woman wants to be with a tiny coward like you. HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! HA! YOUR A RACIST TINY COWARD!!!! Don't forget to take your finger out of your a\$\$!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! By the way, what do you suck again???????????? HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

Really a white
Racist
Akron, OH

#78 Feb 6, 2008

Really a NIGLUVR wrote:

MOST young Black males are criminals!

The vast majority dress like thugs and act like thugs.

They commit crimes constantly such as robberies, carjackings , home break ins, auto thefts, assaults, selling crack , etc.

The young ones bully children at school and disrupt classrooms.

They ALL butcher our language.

BUY A GUN TODAY if you want to protect yourself and your family against these savage thugs in Akron.

If one tries to rob you, carjack you or break into your home, shoot them in the head, send them straight to hell where they belong!

F-ing N@##\$%^!!!

STOP LYING!!

YOU ALL KNOW HOW NI##\$%^ ARE!!!

F-YOU ALL MOTHER F@#\$%^&!!!

KISS MY GD A%%!!!

WE ALL KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#79 Feb 6, 2008

TRUE PARASITE wrote:

Hey Big Lebowski, are you coming over tonight?

I've got a bottle of wild Irish rose and a bag of pork rinds!

Maybe "REALLY" could come over again too, he was funny the way he pranced around in his pink thong singing "you spin me right round"...

Well I hope you can make it, I have a new toy I ordered off channel 79 last month, it's called the "John Holmes twister" with life like features!

We can't put it in the water this time though ok?

Miss you love!

If you can, please stop at CVS and pick up some more "KY warming liquid" alright?

I'll take a king sized snickers too!

HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! White coward, hiding behind your stupid little screen!! Man up or shup up!! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!

Matt from
Akron
"I'm not
issues
retarded,
I'm special!"

#80 Feb 6, 2008

Cloverine Fleetwood wrote:

I cannot imagine how miserable this person must be. The reason he these nonesensical attacks on Blacks is because he has the need to create the illusion that someone is occupying a lower rung on the ladder of Human Springfield existence than him. I would bet that if this fellow ever revealed himself, we White Lake, would find a man very aware of all his inadequacies. He compensates for his MI impotence by hiding in cyberspace engaging in a futile attempts to feel better about himself by putting down others. But, it does not work. He goes to bed every night full of self-loathing and wakes up the same way. This fellow is a man to be pitied. His greatest fear is that he will have to continue to live his own life.

That was right on the mark, Cloverine.

F all you fools
AOL

#82 Feb 6, 2008

Why no respnse to THIS???

In America we have a serious problem with crime, drugs and violence.

Although african Americans make up a mere 13% of the total population they are responsible for over 55% of the prison population and over 70% of armed robberies in America.

All inner cities in America are dangerous and especially dangerous to people of caucasian decent.

The vast majority of african Americans dwell in the inner cities of America.

Gangs are populated mostly with africans, latinis and asians in that order.

In Akron there has been a rising number of armed robberies and violent crime committed almost exclusively by africans Americans.

*The "Thug-life" or "Gangsta" culture is one that breeds savage behavior, crime, drug use and sexual abuse of women.
It's fairly easy to spot someone who represents this culture as they advertise it with thier clothing and mannerisms.*

This culture is one that is disrespectful to adults, authority and schools.

Some say that bringing this issue to the forefront is part of some racist agenda.

Being politically correct you would not make mention of these particular statistics or ethnic groups however by not doing so you withhold valuable information to the public that may prevent a crime or a robbery from being committed in the first place.

I am not politically correct...

The TRUTH

Really
Cleveland, OH

#84 Feb 7, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

F all you fools wrote:

You all are a bunch of NIGLUVIN fools who can kiss my a%% in the middle of Main and Market!

Migs are the SCOURGE of AMERICA, always have been, always will be!

Nothing but crackheads and criminals!!!

Matt from Akron, you are a little bi\$%^!

You can go suck a big fat N@\$%^ di%^!!!

Really
Cleveland, OH

#85 Feb 7, 2008

This following post was provided by "The Truth", who comes in from AOL. He is upset everyone has called him out for pure racist statements, so now he thinks he can discredit other's names.

Michelle NIGLUVER wrote:

Go suck another BLACK CO\$% you filthy NIGLUVIN horbag sl ut!!!

You make me SICK!

Michelle
Akron, OH

#86 Feb 7, 2008

Michelle NIGLUVER wrote:

Go suck another BLACK CO\$% you filthy NIGLUVIN horbag sl ut!!!
You make me SICK!

*WOW!! Is that all I needed to say to prove that you are a worthless
coward who hates yourself? I should have said it along time ago. The
way you responded it must be some truth to what I said.
HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!HA! Maybe now you should stop hiding behind your
little computer jerk! HA!HA!HA!HA!HA!*

Slim
Akron, OH

#87 Feb 7, 2008

Michelle NIGLUVER wrote:

Go suck another BLACK CO\$% you filthy NIGLUVIN horbag sl ut!!!
You make me SICK!

*Hey I've reading your posts and I was wondering what NIGLUVER
stands for?*

Slim
Akron, OH

#88 Feb 7, 2008

Great job North High students. Keep up the good work!

Slim
Akron, OH

#89 Feb 7, 2008

Hey, I've been reading your posts

Denise
Akron, OH

#90 Feb 7, 2008

*This is a positive article for an APS. Why all the hatred? Commend these
teachers and students for a job well done.*

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Akron, OH

#91 Feb 7, 2008

Slim wrote:

Great job North High students. Keep up the good work!

*Thank you for your attempt to bring the focus of this forum back to
where it belongs: the accomplishments of North students and teachers.
North's a student body is a diverse group, and the students, by their
performances, proved that everyone can do well. It is part of some
people's make-ups that they will never allow facts to stand in the way of
their opinions. It is true that, statistically speaking, African American
males are disproportionately involved in crimes and in prison
populations. It is also just as true, that the vast majority African
American males are responsible and productive - real assets to our*

community and country. I think that the only reason African American males are, for the time being, disproportionately involved in inappropriate behavior is because they are too often all treated as if they were part of the problem. Like it or not, we have inaccurately portrayed African American males as a negative underclass. By doing so, we have driven some of them who have less personal support along a negative path. It is no surprise that when people are repeatedly told something is wrong with them, some will begin to act that way. Racists like it when that happens so they can point a finger and claim someone is lower than them. It is the only way a racist can garner a bit of what passes for self-respect.

I worked in urban schools for 30+ years and have interacted with more African American males than I could ever count. I expected them to learn as much as the next person, respected them as fellow human beings, and respected their culture. As I look back, these fine young men (and all my students) probably treated me better than I treated them. The same thing would happen in our society if each of us chose to treat our fellow humans with the dignity they have earned and deserve.

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Akron, OH

#93 Feb 7, 2008

The TRUTH wrote:

You NEVER responded to this CLOVERINE!

Also, how can you even BEGIN to try and pass off the LIE that the VAST MAJORITY of YBM's are productive and responsible???

Why are you lying?

What do you have to gain?

You are 100% full of BS and you F-ing KNOW IT!!!

In America we have a serious problem with crime, drugs and violence.

Although african Americans make up a mere 13% of the total population they are responsible for over 55% of the prison population and over 70% of armed robberies in America.

All inner cities in America are dangerous and especially dangerous to people of caucasian decent.

The vast majority of african Americans dwell in the inner cities of America.

Gangs are populated mostly with africans, latinos and asians in that order.

In Akron there has been a rising number of armed robberies and violent crime committed almost exclusively by africans Americans.

The "Thug-life" or "Gangsta" culture is one that breeds savage behavior, crime, drug use and sexual abuse of women.

It's fairly easy to spot someone who represents this culture as they advertise it with thier clothing and mannerisms.

This culture is one that is disrepectful to adults, authority and schools. Some say that bringing this issue to the forefront is part of some racist agenda.

Being politically correct you would not make mention of these particular statistics or ethnic groups however by not doing so you withhold valuable information to the public that may prevent a crime or a robbery from being committed in the first place.

I am not politically correct...

The TRUTH

Sometimes I am hateful. During those times, I feel awful both physically and mentally. I truly feel bad for you, since, if what you write is a actually a portrayal of who you are, you must be miserable all the time. Let go of your hate - you will make the world a better place and feel better. I wish you well.

The Real Truth
Akron, OH

#94 Feb 7, 2008

The real truth is that you are a racist bigot. Just to comment on one of your fictious statements. White people barely have gangs because their punk cowards who hide behind fake names and computers to spit out their fire. Instead, the rape each other, kill their parents etc. and themselves. They shoot up schools and innocent bystanders because they are COWARDS!! Now that is the real truth!

The Real Truth
Akron, OH

#95 Feb 7, 2008

The real truth is that you are a racist bigot. Just to comment on one of your fictious statements. White people barely have gangs because their punk cowards who hide behind fake names and computers to spit out their fire. Instead, they rape each other, kill their parents etc. and themselves. They shoot up schools and innocent bystanders because they are COWARDS!! Now that is the real truth!

The real truth
Akron, OH

#98 Feb 7, 2008

The TRUTH wrote:

And all BLACK thugs do is rob people, carjack them, break into homes and terrorize everyone because they HAVE NOTHING, they refuse to get an education, they live for FREE from birth till death, everything is

subsidized by UNCLE SAM, from free housing to free food and free medical.

You are the real racist here not me pal.

Tell the truth about YBM's in todays society!

The majority are nothing more than street THUGS selling crack and committing crimes!

BUY A GUN TODAY! Protect yourself from BLACK THUGS who want to take what you have because they have NOTHING!

Please tell the real truth about you being a racist coward. Tell the truth about that pal. You continue to say the same old think about YBM's, blah, blah, blah, blah, because you know that your the uneducated one. Blah, blah, blah, same old nonsense Blacks do this Blacks do that, but White people do a whole of weird killings, smartie! Talk about that Flava Flav, of course you won't because your hiding from the truth. Blame all you want to but we all know isn't true. Peace White thug and please don't drop the bar of soap.

Michelle
Akron, OH

#99 Feb 7, 2008

The real truth wrote:

Please tell the real truth about you being a racist coward. Tell the truth about that pal. You continue to say the same old think about YBM's, blah, blah, blah, blah, because you know that your the uneducated one. Blah, blah, blah, same old nonsense Blacks do this Blacks do that, but White people do a whole of weird killings, smartie! Talk about that Flava Flav, of course you won't because your hiding from the truth. Blame all you want to but we all know isn't true. Peace White thug and please don't drop the bar of soap.

There's really no point in arguing with him. He blames Black for everything that is wrong with the world. He is worthless and a true racist coward. I am not going to respond to him anymore, instead I'm going to pray for him. Just leave well enough alone.

Cloverine
Fleetwood
Akron, OH

#100 Feb 7, 2008

Michelle wrote:

There's really no point in arguing with him. He blames Black for everything that is wrong with the world. He is worthless and a true racist coward. I am not going to respond to him anymore, instead I'm going to pray for him. Just leave well enough alone.

I thing I will stop responding as well and wil join you prayers in the hope that he will be healed.

Scooter
Moonpie
TRUTH! posts.
“Reject
The O'Bama.”
Joined: Oct 15,
2007
Comments: 4691
Zpldmfrqltx,
Dbtlzmjstlv
North Benton,
OH

#102 Feb 8, 2008

Everyone, just keep clicking the "Report Abuse" link whenever the

Crystal Evans
1989
Dallas, TX

#104 Jun 3, 2008

Wow, I am so shocked at what I am reading! Since when did North high School (the Akron area altogether), become so racist? That was not a problem when I was a student there. North High school was a great school academically. We were one great big happy family! It is so sad to see how bad it has gotten (if it has in fact gotten that bad). I now live in Texas, but I am so looking forward to a class reunion. Congratulations North High School on the award!

These aforementioned artifacts highlighted Akron North High School, an inner-city school, typical of many urban high schools throughout the state of Ohio and the United States. The researcher, a faculty member at North High School through 1998-2006, was deeply involved in the drafting and implanting of the *School Improvement Plan*. As Weigle (2008) stated in his previous editorial, “But there is no denying that North took chances, explored new ground and made student learning the central concern” (Beacon Journal, 2008, p. B1). The artifacts demonstrated the dire necessity of further research in order to understand the voices behind the Bronze award who are the informants in this research study. The perspectives of six self-identified African American males are imperative to this ranking because they are the actors of the improvement plan, and they are subjected to the community’s negative attitudes toward the award. A recurring outcry from the community in response to Weigle’s editorial focused on Young Black Males (YBM) being criminals, rapists, carjackers, thieves, thugs, and “YBM’s are the scourge of this planet!!!” (I goes to NorF, as cited in Beacon Journal, 2008, p. 1) The African American males’ performance in school, as well as their reluctance to enroll in Honors and Advanced Placement courses, was a decision that was not chosen solely by the students. Student performance in school is shaped by the expectations and interactions of teachers, counselors, parents, peers, and the community at large.

Research Focus

The major purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the past in order to understand the complex phenomenon of students engaging in science (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003) specifically through the oral histories of six self-

identified African American males enrolled in a high school Advanced Placement Biology class and the oral histories about events that followed during their post high school experiences. To elucidate an understanding of this phenomenon, the research question is what the ecology of African American males' descriptions of their school science, their peer school science community, their lived experiences during and after graduation, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Limitations

Inherent limitations exist in this study because it focused on the oral history of six self-identified African American males in one urban public high school and the only ones enrolled in the course at the time. The number of informants was purposefully small and focused; therefore, the study was limited in making generalizations (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002). These limitations include time, truth, and interaction of informants as noted in Chapter III. Despite this limitation, the small informants' size provided a thick and rich description of their stories. The utilizing of oral history as a research methodology is further discussed in Chapter III.

Subjectivity

The researcher was the teacher in the Advanced Placement Biology course. The objectivity of the researcher was maintained because the researcher was no longer in a position of authority over the informants. Furthermore, the interviews were converted to narratives that maintained the informants' original voice. Throughout the study the following principles were followed:

- Do not steal by plagiarizing or claiming the results of others.
- Do not lie by misreporting sources or by inventing results

- Do not destroy sources or data
- Do not submit data whose accuracy is questionable
- Do not conceal objections that cannot be rebutted
- Do not caricature those with opposing views or deliberately state the participant's views that are rejected
- Do not write reports in a way that deliberately make it difficult for readers to understand, nor oversimplify that ethics is legitimately complex. (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995, pp. 225-256)

Organization of Study

Chapter I included the introduction to the study through the lens of the researcher utilizing the methodology of oral history. Chapter II housed the literature that was essential to review and to examine pertinent and current academic literature that lent to a greater understanding of this research. The intention was not only to review the published literature, but also to augment this review with actual oral history narratives or testimonials from students whose attitudes, behaviors, and intentions were reflected in the literature. The testimonial further validated the current academic research.

Chapter III described the methodology of a qualitative study, the rationale of utilizing oral history, and the process by which data were collected and analyzed. In Chapter IV, the stories of the six self-identified African American males were presented. In Chapter V, the findings of emergent themes of the study addressed the isolated themes emerging from the stories that were identified from Chapter IV. Chapter VI discussed the emergent themes from Chapter V augmented with the existing literature. Chapter VII included a summary, the implications of the data, and further suggestions for areas and questions needing further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Need for Rigorous Curriculum: Omar's Story

I have always identified myself as an African American male who has made the honor roll my entire high school career. I never took honors courses or challenged myself beyond the required courses that were needed. I was never suspended or disruptive in class. In my senior year, I decided that it was time to just play around. All I wanted to do was roam the hallways and make drama among the girls at the school. I wanted to drop pre-calculus after my counselor told me that I was done with all required courses for my high school year and I did not need to take any more academic courses. I do not recall sitting down with the counselor and being asked what my future goals, interests were or even what college I was planning to attend. I did not have that kind of relationship with him. However, my pre-calculus teacher intervened and refused to sign my drop slip, I could tell he really cared about me. I respected and valued his opinion; therefore, I remained in pre-calculus.

There was this crazy science teacher that was in charge of the mentoring program at our school for seniors mentoring freshman. Unfortunately, she was the advisor who I was to check in with once a week. She constantly harassed me to take her Advance Placement Biology course; I knew she was dedicated and cared, but I heard the class was difficult. Additionally, I knew that I did not need more science credits to graduate. She kept saying that college is challenging and the experience in her Advanced Placement Biology class would help me with the transition from high school to college. (Omar, personal communication, May 20, 2004)

The preceding narrative highlights the recurring themes in the literature that minority and low income students are not engaging in challenging course work during their high school years. Numerous studies have concluded that students benefit the most from enrolling in more rigorous courses because the high quality and intense high school

curriculum is the single biggest predictor of success in college (Adelman, 1999, 2006). However, low-income students and students of color are less likely to enroll in these rigorous courses in high school (Education Trust, 2006). Norman, Ault, Bentz, and Meskimen (2001) found one of the crucial challenges in urban educational systems across the United States is the ever-growing academic achievement gap between Black and White students. Consequently, this achievement fault is creating a great concern about the low numbers for underrepresented students pursuing careers in science (Atwater, 2000; National Science Foundation, 1994). Haycock (2001) surveyed high school students asking their belief of why academic achievement gaps exist, their responses included:

counselors who consistently underestimated their potential and placed them in lower-level courses; teachers who often did not know the subjects that they are teaching; principals who dismissed their concerns; a curriculum and set of expectations that felt so miserably low-level that they literally bored the student right out the school door. (p. 8)

Therefore, there was a need to not only explore or understand reasons behind low performing minority groups, but also to provide the framework to increase interest and participation of these students in the field of science.

Bianchini et al. (2000) concluded that “women and ethnic minorities are far from having the same opportunities in science education as White men” (p. 516). Several studies have concluded that many unique school and social barriers prevent Black males from accessing Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-related careers (Education Trust, 2006; The Nation’s Report Card: Science 2005; Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering, 2009). Furthermore, Black students’ quantitative data illustrated distinct behavioral patterns

during their pursuit of educational goals: (1) they lag in years of school completion, and (2) their standardized tests of academic achievement and cognitive skills are low in comparison to their White counterparts (Ogbu, 1978). Therefore, this crisis has serious consequences for counselors, teachers, families, higher educational staff, policymakers, and community leaders. The January 30, 2006 *Newsweek* article, “The Trouble with Boys,” highlighted an alarming statistic comparing boys’ and girls’ achievements in school. Overall, in science, girls in all grade levels are outscoring boys; specifically, girls are 36% more likely to take Advanced Placement or Honors Biology than high-school boys (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Hence, the scope of this academic investigation was to inform the related reasons why self-identified African American males are disproportionately not enrolled in honors and Advanced Placement Science classes.

Schools tend to place higher graded scoring students into more challenging classes; yet, research shows the positive impact of more-rigorous coursework on not only high-achieving students but also on low-achieving students (Haycock, 2001). Haycock indicated that since 1983, there has been progress in increasing the number of students enrolled in rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum. Adelman (1998) concurred that quality and intensity of high school coursework are the most important determinants of success in college—more important than class rank or scores on college admissions tests. Therefore, there is a need for programs and professional development training for staff to implement rigorous high school curriculum for *all* students.

One program that attempts to promote rigorous high school curriculum for all students is the High Schools That Work (SREB, 1999-2007), a data driven school

improvement initiative sponsored by Southern Regional Educational Board. The crux of this program focuses on 10 Key Practices as a framework to make curriculum rigorous for all students, especially for work-bound students in order to increase their achievement and raise their standards and expectations (Bottoms, 2005). High Schools That Work (HSTW) has identified 10 Key Practices that most impact student achievement. The overall goal of the Key Practices is not to let the educators' perceptions of students' daily performance or standardized testing prevent them from providing the rigor for students to truly be challenged. Following are the HSTW 10 Key Practices that provide direction and meaning to comprehensive school improvement and student learning:

High expectations — Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback.

Program of study — Require each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration.

Academic studies — Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real—world problems and projects.

Career/technical studies — Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize the higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education.

Work-based learning — Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school studies and work-based learning and are planned by educators, employers, and students.

Teachers working together — Provide teams of teachers from several disciplines the time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging academic and career/technical studies. Integrate reading, writing, and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and integrate mathematics into science and career/technical classrooms.

Students actively engaged — Engage students in academic and career/technical classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research-based instructional strategies and technology.

Guidance — Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of an accelerated program of study with an academic or career/technical concentration. Provide each student with the same mentor throughout high school to assist with setting goals, selecting courses, reviewing the student’s progress and suggesting appropriate interventions as necessary.

Extra help — Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content.

Culture of continuous improvement — Use student assessment and program evaluation data to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning. (<http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/background/keypractices.asp>, retrieved 10/19/2008)

The Story of the Statistics - Troy’s Story

I identified myself as African-American male who is known for my piercingly loud voice. Ms. Halasa challenged me to enroll in her Advance Placement Biology course but, of course, I complained the entire way. I have been suspended from school numerous times for disrupting classes. Many of my peers in the Advanced Placement Biology course believed I did not belong and even other teachers were surprised when I told them I was taking the class. I recall that on several occasions, Ms. Halasa would remind me that taking this course would help me transition to college the following year.

I recall during final weeks of school, Ms. Halasa walked into the auditorium on a mission, determined to chase down my classmates to get their final assignments completed before graduation. I was among those classmates trying to avoid her. When I realized that I earned a “D” in the course instead of failing, I fell to floor hugging her legs to thank her. I found it difficult to maintain the work because I had poor time management. After graduation, I enrolled in The JKelly University . I saw Ms. Halasa at the homecoming football game in the fall; I screamed, “Your AP Biology course is harder than college.” Privately, Ms. Halasa told me that she was proud of me staying with AP Biology course. At moment I felt proud being the only one who graduated out of all 12 of my friends from freshman year in high school. (Troy, personal communication, November 20, 2005)

The high school dropout rate for African American male students is more than 11%, nearly double the rate of their White counterparts (McShepard, Goler, Baston, 2005). Furthermore, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of 2003 (Weissbourd & Berry, 2004), reported that high school dropouts who work earned less than \$21,000 a year on average. In addition, the opportunities for non-degreed high school individuals who are disadvantaged will greatly increase unemployment due to economic depletion of well paying manual labor jobs. The aforementioned narrative and statistics highlighted the long-debated dilemma of how educators should foster the interest of African American males into attaining a college degree and becoming participants in the economic health of the United States. Instead, many African American males are becoming lifelong debts to society. These debts in our society are found in the employment system, the legal system, and the healthcare system as informed by the following statistics which can be seen when examining Ohio:

- Minority working families in Ohio are roughly twice as likely to be low income as their White counterparts (McShepard et al., 2005).
- In comparison to other men in the region of northeast Ohio, African American males are unemployed for longer periods of time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).
- African American males live 2 to 3 times below the poverty line than all other males living in most counties of northeastern Ohio (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).
- Thirty-two percent of all African American males will enter the state or federal prison system in comparison to 6% of White men (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).
- African American males have higher incidences of depression, high blood pressure, heart problems, and prostate cancer that is similar to the life expectancy of men in developing countries. (Johnson, 2010)

Ohio's alarming statistics paint a negative picture for the future. Therefore, African American males are suffering in areas of education, health, economics, and stereotypes such as being reckless and having little regard for their children (Johnson, 2010).

African American Males in College - MarsB's Story

I am self-identified African American male that came highly recommended by my biology teacher to the Advanced Placement Biology course. I earned top grades on all my biology tests, but I lack motivation to do my homework. She decided academically I could handle the material in the Advanced Placement Biology course, but I slacked too much on homework. However, my peers perceived me as being smart and someone who deserved to be in the course. I still had difficulty in Advanced Placement Biology in keeping-up with the material. The following fall, I joined the Air Force and listed Ms. Halasa as one of my references. I am not sure about attending college. (MarsB, personal communication, October 20, 2005)

Unfortunately, MarsB's narrative concurred with current data, which indicate that 22% more high-school girls are planning to go to college than boys (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The U.S. Department of Education calculated that the dropout rates of male undergraduates has risen to 24% between the years 1970 to 2000. During the fall of 1998, the Education Trust 2004 college data found 59% of White students graduated in four years, in stark contrast to 40% of African-American students. The portion of African American students completing college increased between 1975 and 2000; however, African Americans still remain less likely than their White counterparts to complete college a degree (Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003).

The discussion above outlined plausible causes for African American males' failures in school environments. Legler's (2004) report on *Perspectives on The Gaps: Fostering the Academic Success of Minority and Low-Income Students* listed the

following researchers' findings of overall theories developed since the 1960s: Coleman report (1966) emphasized family poverty; race as a contributing factor (Ogbu, 1978; Steele, 1997); focusing on the resources provided (Education Trust, 2002); teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1998); and students-teacher relationships (Ferguson, 2002). Therefore, the overarching question of this study was to identify what are ecological factors that contributed to the experiences of self-identified African American high school males in their third year of science courses. The following section briefly defines school science, ecology, and the significances of students being able to self-identify in terms of racial naming and gender.

Norm Science versus School Science – Feynman's Story

“When I grow up! I want to be a scientist or baby doctor.” These words were written in the cover of my third grade Young Author Book and every book after that point. My ambition for science continued throughout my academic journey. I once asked my mother, “Why did I want to be a scientist?” Her response was, “You always asked questions and you never accepted answers without explanations. Your teachers said you had an analytical mind.” My earliest memory of being a scientific observer began as I started to explore the natural world around me. I encouraged my three younger sisters to “Keep digging! I know we will find dinosaur fossils,” as I was motivating my sisters to continue digging in our woods. These woods are where our adventures into nature began for me as child. (The Researcher, Halasa)

The researcher's childhood narrative highlighted the thought about the natural curiosity of children. In an attempt to formalize the discipline of science, oftentimes this natural childhood curiosity is stifled; therefore, significantly fewer students are entering the field of science. In order to understand the disinterest in science, this section explored the differences between norm science and school science. Richard Feynman's speech, “What is Science,” presented at the 15th annual meeting of the National Science

Teachers Association in 1966 was an oral history artifact interwoven with existing literature to further the discussion of norm science as opposed to school science.

Disconnection

But I would like to say that I think that “what is science” is not at all equivalent to “how to teach science,” and I must call that to your attention for two reasons.

What is science? Of course you all must know, if you teach it. That’s common sense. What can I say? If you don’t know, every teacher’s edition of every textbook gives a complete discussion of the subject. There is some kind of distorted distillation and watered-down and mixed-up words of Francis Bacon from some centuries ago, words which then were supposed to be the deep philosophy of science. But one of the greatest experimental scientists of the time, who was really doing something, William Harvey, said that what Bacon said science was, was the science that a lord-chancellor would do. He [Bacon] spoke of making observations, but omitted the vital factor of judgment about what to observe and what to pay attention to. (Feynman, 2010, p. 1)

Feynman’s narrative began by addressing the disconnection between the study of science and teaching science. The communities of scientists determine the observations and judgments to be made in order to create science. School science is the printed results created by the communities of scientists (Kuhn, 1966). The dilemma of science entering the classrooms begins with teachers wanting to teach the knowledge of science in a “conditional and constructed” way and “they want students to know about the canonical explanations found in school science textbooks” (Wallace & Louden, 2002, p. 1). Therefore, school science is based on conventional science curriculum developed from the canonical pure science content (Aikenhead, 1996). The study of school science can lead to student disengagement because school science focuses on protocols, rather than understanding the nature of the scientific enterprise, beginning with observations.

Diverse Niches of Science

And so what science is, is not what the philosophers have said it is, and certainly not what the teacher editions say it is. What it is, is a problem which I set for myself after I said I would give this talk. After some time, I was reminded of a little poem:

A centipede was happy quite, until a toad in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg comes after which?"
This raised his doubts to such a pitch
He fell distracted in the ditch
Not knowing how to run.

All my life, I have been doing science and known what it was, but what I have come to tell you—which foot comes after which—I am unable to do, and furthermore, I am worried by the analogy in the poem that when I go home I will no longer be able to do any research.

Under these circumstances of the difficulty of the subject, and my dislike of philosophical exposition, I will present it in a very unusual way. I am just going to tell you how I learned what science is.

That's a little bit childish. I learned it as a child. I have had it in my blood from the beginning. And I would like to tell you how it got in. This sounds as though I am trying to tell you how to teach, but that is not my intention. I'm going to tell you what science is like by how I learned what science is like. (Feynman, 2010, p. 1)

Feynman's struggle to conceptualize science is not uncommon among the community of scientists and science educators. While the science community attempts to define the study of science through their research and observation, Feynman reverted to an early childhood experience to define science. Fostering childhood curiosity not only helps the child to understand the world around him but provides a foundation for scientific literacy (Harlen, 2001). The lacking of scientific discourses and experiences at the outset of a child's early academic journey will lead to barriers in understanding science and disengagement in their secondary education (Osborne & Freyberg, 1982, 1985). Harlen (2001) described science education for children beginning with simple observations:

When they realize that they can find things out for themselves by their own actions: by sifting through handfuls of sand, by blowing bubbles, by putting salt in water, by comparing different materials, by regular observation of the moon and stars. So the kind of science we are talking about concerns basic ideas that can be developed through simple investigations from various sources and by discussion. (p. 4)

Harlen's argument was reflected in Feynman's speech that all science is based on observations. Children are inquisitive prior to entering the education system; therefore, there is a need to cultivate this curiosity both in and out of the classroom. These simple investigations mentioned above are echoed in the next part of Feynman's speech that highlights childhood memories of learning science and math.

The Personal Science Experience

My father did it to me. When my mother was carrying me, it is reported--I am not directly aware of the conversation--my father said that "if it's a boy, he'll be a scientist." How did he do it? He never told me I should be a scientist. He was not a scientist; he was a businessman, a sales manager of a uniform company, but he read about science and loved it.

When I was very young--the earliest story I know--when I still ate in a high chair, my father would play a game with me after dinner. He had brought a whole lot of old rectangular bathroom floor tiles from some place in Long Island City. We sat them up on end, one next to the other, and I was allowed to push the end one and watch the whole thing go down. So far, so good.

Next, the game improved. The tiles were different colors. I must put one white, two blues, one white, two blues, and another white and then two blues--I may want to put another blue, but it must be a white. You recognize already the usual insidious cleverness; first delight him in play, and then slowly inject material of educational value.

Well, my mother, who is a much more feeling woman, began to realize the insidiousness of his efforts and said, "Mel, please let the poor child put a blue tile if he wants to." My father said, "No, I want him to pay attention to patterns. It is the only thing I can do that is mathematics at this earliest level..."

When I was still pretty young--I don't know how old exactly--I had a ball in a wagon I was pulling, and I noticed something, so I ran up to my father to say that "When I pull the wagon, the ball runs to the back,

and when I am running with the wagon and stop, the ball runs to the front. Why?"

How would you answer?

He said, "That, nobody knows." He said, "It's very general, though, it happens all the time to anything; anything that is moving tends to keep moving; anything standing still tries to maintain that condition. If you look close, you will see the ball does not run to the back of the wagon where you start from standing still. It moves forward a bit too, but not as fast as the wagon. The back of the wagon catches up with the ball, which has trouble getting started moving. It's called inertia, that principle." I did run back to check, and sure enough, the ball didn't go backwards. He put the difference between what we know and what we call it very distinctly. (Feynman, 2010, p. 3)

The pedagogy of Feynman's father aligned with the findings of Geelan, Larochelle, and Lemke (2002) that there is "deep and enduring tension between personal experiences and formal representation of scientific knowledge in school science classrooms" (p. 22). Feynman's personal experience with physical properties aligns with personal experiences of other students in which school science seeks to explain the world around them (Geelan et al., 2002). The school environment is challenged by the students' informal knowledge of science and their ability to transfer the preconceptions or misconceptions into formal knowledge of science (Duit & Treagust, 1998). "The tension between students' common sense knowledge and the formal knowledge of science remains, however, because of the language science uses to represent important and long-settled knowledge" (Geelan et al., 2002, p. 22). The next segment of Feynman's narrative illustrated the tension among common-sense knowledge and the formal knowledge that are attributed to science.

The Great Divide

On the weekends, my father would take me for walks in the woods. He often took me for walks, and we learned all about nature, and so on, in

the process. But the other children, friends of mine also wanted to go and tried to get my father to take them. He didn't want to; because he said I was more advanced. I'm not trying to tell you how to teach, because what my father was doing was with a class of just one student; if he had a class of more than one, he was incapable of doing it.

So we went alone for our walk in the woods. But mothers were very powerful in those days as they are now, and they convinced the other fathers that they had to take their own sons out for walks in the woods. So all fathers took all sons out for walks in the woods one Sunday afternoon. The next day, Monday, we were playing in the fields and this boy said to me, "See that bird standing on the stump there? What's the name of it?" I said, "I haven't got the slightest idea." He said, "It's a brown-throated thrush. Your father doesn't teach you much about science." (Feynman, 2010, p. 4)

The aforementioned example highlighted the tension between common knowledge and scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is demonstrated by the use of "specialized vocabulary, syntax, and genre structures, quite different from the language of common sense" (Geelan et al., 2002, p. 24). Martin (1993) concurred that science has "evolved a special language in order to interpret the work in its own, not in common sense terms" (p. 200). The school science classroom demoralizes students' personal experiences and validates the knowledge that was once provisional and contestable (Geelan et al., 2002). "A [science] law is something you can't deny. A law is law. . . . You obey a law" (Desautels & Larochelle, 1989, p. 117). Feynman's narrative below continued to demonstrate that the knowledge of scientific vocabulary does not transfer to the knowledge of science.

Science Vocabulary

I smiled to myself, because my father had already taught me that [the name] doesn't tell me anything about the bird. He taught me "See that bird? It's a brown-throated thrush, but in Germany it's called a halsenflugel, and in Chinese they call it a chung ling and even if you know all those names for it, you still know nothing about the bird—you only

know something about people; what they call that bird. Now that thrush sings, and teaches its young to fly, and flies so many miles away during the summer across the country, and nobody knows how it finds its way,” and so forth. There is a difference between the name of the thing and what goes on. (Feynman, 2010, p. 4)

Feynman’s naming was affirmed by Lemke’s (1998) statement that “if you ask most teachers of science what their main goal is, they will probably say: for my students to understand the basic concepts of physics, chemistry, biology, or whatever other field is being studied” (p. 2). Knowing the nomenclature of science vocabulary does not translate into fully understanding the scientific concept. However, the intimidating nature of scientific vocabulary forces students to focus on pronunciation rather than understanding the scientific concepts, resulting in the students’ disengagement for the science field. “Forcing speakers to monitor their language typically reproduces silence” (Perry & Deplit, 1998, p. 18).

Language of Science

The result of this is that I cannot remember anybody’s name, and when people discuss physics with me they often are exasperated when they say “the Fitz-Cronin effect,” and I ask “What is the effect?” and I can’t remember the name.

I would like to say a word or two--may I interrupt my little tale--about words and definitions, because it is necessary to learn the words.

It is not science. That doesn’t mean, just because it is not science, that we don’t have to teach the words. We are not talking about what to teach; we are talking about what science is. It is not science to know how to change Centigrade to Fahrenheit. It’s necessary, but it is not exactly science. In the same sense, if you were discussing what art is, you wouldn’t say art is the knowledge of the fact that a 3-B pencil is softer than a 2-H pencil. It’s a distinct difference. That doesn’t mean an art teacher shouldn’t teach that, or that an artist gets along very well if he doesn’t know that. (Actually, you can find out in a minute by trying it; but that’s a scientific way that art teachers may not think of explaining.)

In order to talk to each other, we have to have words, and that’s all right. It’s a good idea to try to see the difference, and it’s a good idea to

know when we are teaching the tools of science, such as words, and when we are teaching science itself. (Feynman, 2010, p. 4)

Feynman's narrative above was echoed in Roth's (2005) statement that "language as a formal system provides resources for conducting every day affairs, including doing of science" (p. 1). Language is a critical bridge, needed to relay scientific knowledge from one context to another. Lemke (1998) stated that language is a system in which scientists use specialized languages. However, language is only the beginning of understanding science, the application or understanding of those terms in relation to one another is paramount to the gaining of scientific knowledge (Lemke, 1990).

Classroom language is not just a list of technical terms, or even just a recital of definitions. It is the *use* of those terms in relations to one another, across a wide variety of contexts. Students have to learn how to combine the meanings of different terms according to the accepted ways of talking science. They have to talk and write and reason in phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs of scientific language (p. 12). Lemke (1998) expanded upon the argument that everything needs context including "pictures and diagrams, graphs and maps, equations and symbolic representations, and the symbolism of actions that mean as well as cause" (p. 5).

Textbook

To make my point still clearer, I shall pick out a certain science book to criticize unfavorably, which is unfair, because I am sure that with little ingenuity, I can find equally unfavorable things to say about others. There is a first grade science book which, in the first lesson of the first grade, begins in an unfortunate manner to teach science, because it starts off on the wrong idea of what science is. There is a picture of a dog--a windable toy dog--and a hand comes to the winder, and then the dog is able to move. Under the last picture, it says "What makes it move?" Later on, there is a picture of a real dog and the question, "What makes it

move?” Then there is a picture of a motorbike and the question, “What makes it move?” and so on.

I thought at first they were getting ready to tell what science was going to be about--physics, biology, chemistry--but that wasn't it. The answer was in the teacher's edition of the book: the answer I was trying to learn is that “energy makes it move.”

Now, energy is a very subtle concept. It is very, very difficult to get right. What I meant is that it is not easy to understand energy well enough to use it right, so that you can deduce something correctly using the energy idea--it is beyond the first grade. It would be equally well to say that “God makes it move,” or “spirit makes it move,” or “movability makes it move.”(In fact, one could equally well say “energy makes it stop.”)

Look at it this way: that's only the definition of energy; it should be reversed. We might say when something can move that it has energy in it, but not what makes it move is energy. This is a very subtle difference. It's the same with this inertia proposition.

Perhaps I can make the difference a little clearer this way: If you ask a child what makes the toy dog move, you should think about what an ordinary human being would answer. The answer is that you wound up the spring; it tries to unwind and pushes the gear around.

What a good way to begin a science course! Take apart the toy; see how it works. See the cleverness of the gears; see the ratchets. Learn something about the toy, the way the toy is put together, the ingenuity of people devising the ratchets and other things. That's good. The question is fine. The answer is a little unfortunate, because what they were trying to do is teach a definition of what is energy. But nothing whatever is learned.

Suppose a student would say, “I don't think energy makes it move.” Where does the discussion go from there?

I finally figured out a way to test whether you have taught an idea or you have only taught a definition.

Test it this way: you say, “Without using the new word which you have just learned, try to rephrase what you have just learned in your own language.” Without using the word “energy,” tell me what you know now about the dog's motion.” You cannot. So you learned nothing about science. That may be all right. You may not want to learn something about science right away. You have to learn definitions. But for the very first lesson, is that not possibly destructive?

I think for lesson number one, to learn a mystic formula for answering questions is very bad. The book has some others: “gravity makes it fall;” “the soles of your shoes wear out because of friction.” Shoe leather wears out because it rubs against the sidewalk and the little notches and bumps on the sidewalk grab pieces and pull them off. To

simply say it is because of friction, is sad, because it's not science.
(Feynman, 2010, p. 7)

Feynman's argument against the approach of scientific textbooks is an issue that must be addressed to improve the students' ability to construct and understand science. Science textbooks publish the accepted approach of science; however, they do not teach the reasons behind a phenomenon, but rather only the scientific terms without explanation or application of the scientific ideas. The preparation of current normal-scientific tradition is found in science textbooks. "Textbooks, however, being pedagogic vehicles for the perpetuation of normal science, have to be rewritten in whole or in part whenever the language, problem-structure, or standards of normal science change" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 137). The latest science achievements are never recounted in their original forms; therefore, they are not written in science textbooks both elementary and advanced (Kuhn, 1996).

Textbooks are misleading about the true nature of the scientific enterprise; however, they are the single image that portrays all aspects of the study of science. The latest written record, the textbook, is "the outcome of the most recent revolution in the [science] field" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 137). Textbooks are the essence of the nature of science and serve as the basic foundation for developing future practitioners of science. A fallacy of scientific textbooks is the ability to recount science as a linear or cumulative body of work neglecting the development of the science (Kuhn, 1996). Furthermore,

by disguising changes, such as Aristotelian to Galilean and from Galilean to Newtonian dynamics, the textbook tendency to make the development of the science linear hides a process that lies at the heart of the most significant episodes of scientific development. (p. 140)

Science students merely deal with author's textual interpretation rather than beginning an authentic transactional part of the student's intellectual well being. "Nevertheless, it illustrates once more the pattern of historical mistakes that misleads both students and laymen about the nature of the scientific enterprise" (p. 142).

"Within Spencer's famous question, What knowledge is of most worth? there lies another even more contentious question: *Whose* knowledge is of most worth?" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 1). Textbooks are not simply delivery systems of facts but rather "they are at once the results of political, economical, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, pp. 1-2). Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) stated that textbooks are one aspect of schooling that is openly scrutinized which students are or are not using in the classroom.

Textbooks, for better or worse, dominate what students learn. They set the curriculum, and often the facts learned, in most subjects. For many students, textbooks are their first and sometimes only early exposure to books and to reading. The public regards textbooks as authoritative, accurate, and necessary. And teachers rely on them to organize lessons and structure subject matter. But the current systems of textbook adoption has filled our schools with Trojan horses-glossily covered blocks of paper whose words emerge to deaden the minds of our nation's youth, and make them enemies of learning. (Down, 1998, p. viii)

Feynman began to address the deficiency of teaching science from current mass produced science textbooks. Science textbooks play an important role in developing future practitioners of science, in addition to general population. However, the conflicts of using current mass production science textbooks are not only prevalent in the classrooms but the community at large because it defines the power of what agenda is taught (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Schattschneider, 1975). "We need to pay considerable attention to those 'texts,' widely sponsored, reviewed, and read, that try to

convince ‘the public’ that the wrong knowledge is not being taught in our educational institutions” (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 18).

Science as a Word versus Science as a Concept

My father dealt a little bit with energy and used the term after I got a little bit of the idea about it. What he would have done I know, because he did in fact essentially the same thing--though not the same example of the toy dog. He would say, “It moves because the sun is shining,” if he wanted to give the same lesson.

I would say, “No. What has that to do with the sun shining? It moved because I wound up the springs.”

“And why, my friend, are you able to move to wind up the spring?”

“I eat.”

“What, my friend, do you eat?”

“I eat plants.”

“And how do they grow?”

“They grow because the sun is shining.”

And it is the same with the [real] dog.

What about gasoline? Accumulated energy of the sun, which is captured by plants and preserved in the ground. Other examples all end with the sun. And so the same idea about the world that our textbook is driving at is phrased in a very exciting way.

All the things that we see that are moving, are moving because the sun is shining. It does explain the relationship of one source of energy to another, and it can be denied by the child. He could say, “I don’t think it is on account of the sun shining,” and you can start a discussion. So there is a difference. (Later I could challenge him with the tides, and what makes the earth turn, and have my hand on mystery again.)

That is just an example of the difference between definitions (which are necessary) and science. The only objection in this particular case was that it was the first lesson. It must certainly come in later, telling you what energy is, but not to such a simple question as “What makes a [toy] dog move?” A child should be given a child’s answer. “Open it up; let’s look at it.” (Feynman, 2010, p. 8)

Feynman described the importance of not only knowing definitions in science but actual understanding the science behind the words. Although necessary to speak the

language of science, a student can know how to spell the term or pronounce it; however, they do not know the meaning in context of their own living environment.

Attempts to develop scientific ideas without the use of process skills leads only to rote learning and knowledge that is confined to the situations in which it was learned, making little contribution to understanding new experiences. In other words, content without process does not lead to learning with understanding, which, by definition, is knowledge that can be applied in situations other than those in which it was learned. (Harlen, 2001, p. 2)

Science involves a process of application of knowledge beyond words.

Inquiry

During those walks in the woods, I learned a great deal. In the case of birds, for example, I already mentioned migration, but I will give you another example of birds in the woods. Instead of naming them, my father would say, “Look, notice that the bird is always pecking in its feathers. It pecks a lot in its feathers. Why do you think it pecks the feathers?”

I guessed it’s because the feathers are ruffled, and he’s trying to straighten them out. He said, “Okay, when would the feathers get ruffled, or how would they get ruffled?”

“When he flies. When he walks around, it’s okay; but when he flies, it ruffles the feathers.”

Then he would say, “You would guess then when the bird just landed he would have to peck more at his feathers than after he has straightened them out and has just been walking around the ground for a while. Okay, let’s look.”

So we would look, and we would watch, and it turned out, as far as I could make out, that the bird pecked about as much and as often no matter how long he was walking on the ground and not just directly after flight.

So my guess was wrong, and I couldn’t guess the right reason. My father revealed the reason.

It is that the birds have lice. There is a little flake that comes off the feather, my father taught me, stuff that can be eaten, and the louse eats it. And then on the louse, there is a little bit of wax in the joints between the sections of the leg that oozes out, and there is a mite that lives in there that can eat that wax. Now the mite has such a good source of food that it doesn’t digest it too well, so from the rear end there comes a liquid that has too much sugar, and in that sugar lives a tiny creature, etc.

The facts are not correct; the spirit is correct. First, I learned about parasitism, one on the other, on the other, on the other. Second, he went on to say that in the world whenever there is any source of something that could be eaten to make life go, some form of life finds a way to make use of that source; and that each little bit of left over stuff is eaten by something.

Now the point of this is that the result of observation, even if I were unable to come to the ultimate conclusion, was a wonderful piece of gold, with marvelous results. It was something marvelous.

What is “inquiry-based” instruction in science? (Feynman, 2010, p. 9)

There is no science without inquiry. Scientific inquiry is a way of knowing and a process of doing science. Scientists study the natural world and propose explanations based on the evidence derived from their work using inquiry. Scientific inquiry is both pedagogy and content (National Research Council, 1996).

Inquiry-based" instruction in science is an active way for students to obtain scientific knowledge that involves all of the following in one way or another: making observations and describing objects and events; identifying and asking valid and testable questions to guide scientific investigations; examining books and other sources and learning from lectures or discussions to gather information to see what is already known; reflecting on appropriate scientific practices and procedures during the planning, designing and conducting of investigations; using tools to gather, analyze and interpret data; using technology and mathematics to improve investigations and communications; organizing, evaluating and interpreting observations, measurements and other data; reviewing what is already known in light of experimental evidence; developing hypotheses and alternative explanations, proposing answers, suggesting models and providing predictions; evaluating a variety of assumptions and conclusions and revising explanatory models using logic and evidence; communicating ideas, results of investigations and scientific arguments to others for discussion and evaluation. (Ohio Department Education, 2006)

Classroom Observations

Suppose I were told to observe, to make a list, to write down, to do this, to look, and when I wrote my list down, it was filed with 130 other lists in the back of a notebook. I would learn that the result of observation is relatively dull, that nothing much comes of it.

I think it is very important--at least it was to me--that if you are going to teach people to make observations, you should show that

something wonderful can come from them. I learned then what science was about: it was patience. If you looked, and you watched, and you paid attention, you got a great reward from it--although possibly not every time. As a result, when I became a more mature man, I would painstakingly, hour after hour, for years, work on problems--sometimes many years, sometimes shorter times; many of them failing, lots of stuff going into the wastebasket--but every once in a while there was the gold of a new understanding that I had learned to expect when I was a kid, the result of observation. For I did not learn that observation was not worthwhile.

Incidentally, in the forest we learned other things. We would go for walks and see all the regular things, and talk about many things: about the growing plants, the struggle of the trees for light, how they try to get as high as they can, and to solve the problem of getting water higher than 35 or 40 feet, the little plants on the ground that look for the little bits of light that come through all that growth, and so forth.

One day, after we had seen all this, my father took me to the forest again and said, "In all this time we have been looking at the forest we have only seen half of what is going on, exactly half."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "We have been looking at how all these things grow; but for each bit of growth, there must be the same amount of decay--otherwise, the materials would be consumed forever: dead trees would lie there, having used up all the stuff from the air and the ground, and it wouldn't get back into the ground or the air, so nothing else could grow because there is no material available. There must be for each bit of growth exactly the same amount of decay."

There then followed many walks in the woods during which we broke up old stumps, saw frizzy bags and funguses growing; he couldn't show me bacteria, but we saw the softening effects, and so on. [Thus] I saw the forest as a process of the constant turning of materials.

There were many such things, descriptions of things, in odd ways. He often started to talk about things like this: "Suppose a man from Mars were to come down and look at the world." For example, when I was playing with my electric trains, he told me that there is a great wheel being turned by water which is connected by filaments of copper, which spread out and spread out and spread out in all directions; and then there are little wheels, and all those little wheels turn when the big wheel turns. The relation between them is only that there is copper and iron, nothing else--no moving parts. You turn one wheel here, and all the little wheels all over the place turn, and your train is one of them. It was a wonderful world my father told me about.

You might wonder what he got out of it all. I went to MIT. I went to Princeton. I came home, and he said, "Now you've got a science

education. I have always wanted to know something that I have never understood, and so, my son, I want you to explain it to me.”

I said, “yes.”

He said, “I understand that they say that light is emitted from an atom when it goes from one state to another, from an excited state to a state of lower energy.

I said, “That’s right.”

“And light is a kind of particle, a photon, I think they call it.”

“Yes.”

“So if the photon comes out of the atom when it goes from the excited to the lower state, the photon must have been in the atom in the excited state.”

I said, “Well, no.”

He said, “Well, how do you look at it so you can think of a particle photon coming out without it having been in there in the excited state?”

I thought a few minutes, and I said, I’m sorry; I don’t know. I can’t explain it to you.”

He was very disappointed after all these years and years of trying to teach me something, that it came out with such poor results. (Feynman, 2010, p. 11)

Milne and Taylor (1998) stated that school science is viewed with constraints of teacher-centered activities, science laboratory investigation, aligning all students to the same observations. Milne and Taylor defined six pedagogical myths that critically impact the practices of contemporary school science classrooms:

1. Everyone involved in practical activity makes identical observations (p. 35).
2. During the practical activity, theories percolate into consciousness from observations (p. 35).
3. Observations obtained during the practical activity are more important than is discourse for developing a knowledge of Nature (p. 36).
4. Throughout time, scientific definitions are fixed. The teacher/textbook is the source of scientific definitions. The relationship between object and word is fixed (p. 43).
5. In the practical activity, data speaks for its self; and because language is transparent, language serves as a vehicle for accurately describing reality” (p. 43).

6. The experiment report is a descriptive account of a practical activity. It is a true record of experimental activity (p. 44).

These pedagogical myths govern many of the practices of modern school science and can be traced back to the development of experimental science in the 17th century (Milne & Taylor, 1998). Science classrooms need to provide science laboratory investigations that challenge students discourse about the science knowledge beyond an observation in order for student to better construct their knowledge of science. “Open inquiry is a Sisyphean task: pointless and misguided” (Settlage, 2007, p. 466).

Normal Science

The world looks so different after learning science. For example, trees are made of air, primarily. When they are burned, they go back to air, and in the flaming heat is released the flaming heat of the sun which was bound in to convert the air into tree, and in the ash is the small remnant of the part which did not come from air that came from the solid earth, instead. These are beautiful things, and the content of science is wonderfully full of them. They are very inspiring, and they can be used to inspire others.

Another of the qualities of science is that it teaches the value of rational thought as well as the importance of freedom of thought; the positive results that come from doubting that the lessons are all true. You must here distinguish--especially in teaching--the science from the forms or procedures that are sometimes used in developing science. It is easy to say, “We write, experiment, and observe, and do this or that.” You can copy that form exactly. But great religions are dissipated by following form without remembering the direct content of the teaching of the great leaders. In the same way, it is possible to follow form and call it science, but that is pseudo-science. In this way, we all suffer from the kind of tyranny we have today in the many institutions that have come under the influence of pseudoscientific advisers.

We have many studies in teaching, for example, in which people make observations, make lists, do statistics, and so on, but these do not thereby become established science, established knowledge. They are merely an imitative form of science analogous to the South Sea Islanders’ airfields--radio towers, etc., made out of wood. The islanders expect a great airplane to arrive. They even build wooden airplanes of the same shape as they see in the foreigners’ airfields around them, but strangely

enough, their wood planes do not fly. The result of this pseudoscientific imitation is to produce experts, which many of you are. [But] you teachers, who are really teaching children at the bottom of the heap, can maybe doubt the experts. As a matter of fact, I can also define science another way: Science is the belief in the ignorance of experts. (Feynman, 2010, p. 11)

Feynmann's description above suggested science is not about believing claims based on one's faith, or because of their fame, but because science is supported by evidence. Science experts need to be challenged, and in norm science, are forced to do so through a process. Norm science is true science created in laboratories and accepted by scientists. A scientific community cannot practice its trade without equipment and tools. More importantly it cannot be practiced without a set of received beliefs (Kuhn, 1996). "Norm science means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice. These achievements can be called paradigms" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10).

The paradigms of norm science evolve in two distinct stages. First, norm science stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques that are shared by the members of a given community. In other words, "normal science, the activity in which most scientists inevitably spend almost all their time, is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like – success of the enterprise derives from the community's willingness to defend that assumption, if necessary at considerable cost" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 5). The scientific community of experts depends on this accepted umbrella of belief to practice their own niche.

Second, norm science denotes one sort of element in a constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science. Therefore, “. . . research is a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 5). The paradigm governs the group of practitioners, not subject matters, and is needed to form a foundation of beliefs from which scientists can work. “Men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 11). When the paradigm begins “the tradition-shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of norm science” (p. 6), a Scientific Revolution begins.

Paradigm Shift

When someone says, “Science teaches such and such,” he is using the word incorrectly. Science doesn’t teach anything; experience teaches it. If they say to you, “Science has shown such and such,” you might ask, “How does science show it? How did the scientists find out? How? What? Where?”

It should not be “science has shown” but “this experiment, this effect, has shown.” And you have as much right as anyone else, upon hearing about the experiments--but be patient and listen to all the evidence--to judge whether a sensible conclusion has been arrived at. (Feynman, 2010, p. 12)

A paradigm is developed by inquiry of random collections of facts by a variety of researchers within the scientific community confronting the same phenomenon but interpreting and describing it from different angles. When a paradigm is first accepted, the scientific community has touched the surface of fact-finding knowledge of that particular paradigm. The accepted paradigm has won against its competitors but still leaves opportunity for a vast amount of scientific investigation to occur. As the result of

accepting the new paradigm, “the paradigm guides the whole group’s research, and it is the criterion that most clearly proclaims a field of science” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 22). In a sense, a paradigm is a piece of wood in which the nail, the problem, has been precisely and accurately placed for each scientist to concentrate on hammering the nail until the wood begins to split or the nail needs to be replaced.

The split in the foundation of the paradigm creates a revolution in which a new piece of wood is needed before the foundation disappears and the cycle of focus occurs again. Kuhn stated the transition to a new paradigm is known as a Scientific Revolution, during this transition research shifts from normal to extraordinary. “The road to a firm research consensus is extraordinarily arduous” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 15). The scientist develops tunnel vision with vigorous depth and detail that no other paradigm will enter unless there is a new Scientific Revolution. The newly accepted paradigm created “confidence that they [investigators] were on the right track encouraged scientists to undertake a more precise, esoteric and consuming sorts of work” (p. 18). As a result of the new paradigm, special science develops with specialized journals, foundations, and societies. The newly transformed groups are accepted as a profession or a discipline. “The successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual development pattern of mature science” (p. 12).

A Scientific Revolution occurs when the new paradigm emphasizes the failure of the old paradigm’s ability to solve problems (Kuhn, 1996). The individual scientists who still cling to the old paradigm become “doomed to isolation or must attach themselves to some other group” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 19). The failure of the old paradigm is the acknowledgement of a crisis by the scientific community and “the failures of the existing

rules is the prelude to a search for new ones” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 68). One cannot reject one paradigm without simultaneously substituting another; otherwise, scientist community must reject science itself. “As in manufacturing so in science – retooling [paradigm shift] is an extravagance to be reserved for the occasion that demands it” (p. 76).

Fallibility of Science

In a field which is so complicated [as education] that true science is not yet able to get anywhere, we have to rely on a kind of old-fashioned wisdom, a kind of definite straightforwardness. I am trying to inspire the teacher at the bottom to have some hope and some self-confidence in common sense and natural intelligence. The experts who are leading you may be wrong.

I have probably ruined the system, and the students that are coming into Caltech no longer will be any good. I think we live in an unscientific age in which almost all the buffeting of communications and television-- words, books, and so on--are unscientific. As a result, there is a considerable amount of intellectual tyranny in the name of science.

It is necessary to teach both to accept and to reject the past with a kind of balance that takes considerable skill. Science alone of all the subjects contains within itself the lesson of the danger of belief in the infallibility of the greatest teachers of the preceding generation. (Feynman, 2010, p. 12)

The Scientific Revolution that occurs during paradigm shift does not lend itself to the school science classroom. School science attempts to teach the new paradigm, but often fails to transmit an accurate view of science (Cobern, 1991; Gauld, 1982; Ryan & Aikenhead, 1992). School science does not focus on creating new investigations for paradigm shifts, but rather students are exploring the existing facts defined in the present paradigm found in classroom textbooks. Furthermore, in the K-12 setting, students study the piece of wood that is already a hammered paradigm and never truly experience their own hammering. School science incorporation of hands-on, minds-on or inquiry is a

method but not a Scientific Revolution. The gap between the Scientific Revolution and school science begins with a structural problem.

From a critical constructivist perspective, we envisage the emergence of school science classroom environment in which students are empowered through critical reflective thinking to understand the historical and cultural contingency and interconnectedness of the discursive practices of both science and school science. School science should become a rich educative form in which students learn both to apply (pluralistic) scientific standards of judgment and to be critically aware of the standards of judgment underpinning the knowledge claims, including those framed by both realist and constructivist belief systems. (Milne & Taylor, 1998, pp. 44-46)

This structural problem that occurs in school science has a negative effect on individuals. The American public is disadvantaged or ill-equipped to make informed decisions about science. These scientifically illiterate individuals cannot comprehend scientific reason and cannot apply this reasoning to public issues (Toumey, 1996).

“American public is ill-equipped to make informed decisions about scientific issues, decisions affecting science (appropriations, legislation, policy, and the curriculum of public school science education, to name a few) are nevertheless made according to the democratic process. Science in America is strongly affected by extra-scientific factors” (Toumey, 1996, p. 7). In the science classroom it is imperative that scientific knowledge or reasoning be understood by the individual students. Toumey (1996) suggested “it is possible to borrow, steal, distort, or manipulate these symbols [scientific] for causes and ideologies that do not necessarily have anything to do with science” (p. 7). Science as Feynman defined earlier is not infallible; therefore, science classrooms are the vehicles by which science is created for the future paradigm shifts and policy decision. These future students are needed to become scientifically literate in order to change the direction of science.

Ecology

A traditional view of ecology instantly refers to the term biological ecosystem that is taught in a high school biology course. Biological ecosystems are defined as the sum of physical features (non-living) and organisms (living) occurring in a given area (Campbell & Reece, 2005; Keaton & Gould, 1986). However, there are different uses of the term ecology. Baker (1963) defined ecology as the study of the surroundings or the environment of behavior. Mitchell (1970) states:

it seems clear that certain individuals will be more influenced by changes in their environment than others. Both the individual and the situation provide independent causative factors, but in any particular situation the primary determinant of an individual's behavior would seem to be the interaction between the individual and that situation in which he will perform the behavior we wish to predict. (p. 10)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) articulated a new view evolving a three part approach to the study of ecology: (1) the evolving interaction of a developing person, (2) of the environment, and (3) especially of the evolving interaction between the two.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) outlined this new perspective of ecology in relation to human development as the following:

- (1) ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian Matushka dolls at the innermost level is the immediate setting containing the developing person;
- (2) looking beyond single settings to the relations between them interconnections can be as decisive for development as events taking place within a given setting;
- (3) ecological environment takes us yet farther afield and evokes a hypothesis that the person's development is profoundly affected by events occurring in settings in which the person is not even present. (p. 3)

The three levels of ecological environments within any culture or subculture are settings of a given nature that include homes, streets, schools or offices; however, while these settings tend to be similar in a culture they are distinctly different from one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Each setting contains a unique set of culturally expected norms that can be altered to produce corresponding changes in behavior and development of individual within the setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). “Environments [ecological] are not distinguished by reference to linear variables but are analyzed in systems terms” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 5).

The innermost level of ecological schema begins with dyad, or the two person system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Traditional laboratory experiments collect data on a single variable testing on one experimental subject (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In examining a dynamic between teacher-student interactions, the data are collected on either the teacher or the student but rarely for both simultaneously. If new or dynamic possibilities emerge then the dyadic data will illustrate the development of both pairs undergoing a process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The variable studied would have to include the developmental changes not only in the student but also in the teacher who interacts with the student (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The members in a dyadic system are not immune to a developmental change in response to each other; coinciding with Newton’s Third Law for every action there is an opposite and equal reaction (Newton, 1687).

Several findings indicate that the capacity of a dyad to serve as an effective context for human development is crucially dependent on the presence and participation of third parties, such as spouses, relatives, friends, and neighbors. If such third parties are absent, or if they play disruptive rather than a supportive role, the developmental process, considered as a system, breaks down; like a

three-legged stool, it is more easily upset if one leg is broken, or shorter than the others. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 5)

The next level that describes the human development incorporates the triadic principle that examines the relationships between the dyad and other interconnecting settings. The triadic principle can be applied to the ecological schema between settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological transitions constantly occur during a person's life span as they shift in their role or setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The importance of this ecological developmental transitions begins to have a "magic-like power to alter" how a person is treated, how the person acts, what a person does and thereby even how the person thinks and feels; however, this does not affect the person alone but the others in that person's world (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). The change in the person's role creates an expectation for a particular behavior associated with particular positions in society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These principles include the world in which the person is interacting with because the others in that person's world can inspire the person to undertake similar activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The final ecological level examines human developmental in a more abstract way. An ecological environment can extend beyond the immediate situation which affects the developing person directly in their present environment. The developing person is affected by the nature of these links indirectly influencing the interaction among those who they interact with on a daily basis. "This complex of interrelations within the immediate setting is referred to as the *microsystem*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7).

The "ecological revolution" is that basing the prediction of behavior on our knowledge of the individual alone has been a serious mistake. We need to include distinguishing characteristics of the situation in which our assessment of

the individual occurs as well as the situation in which he will perform the behavior we wish to predict. (Mitchell, 1970, p. 9)

Furthermore, an ecological approach to the study of human development requires a re-orientation of conventional view of the proper relations between science and public policy. The traditional position, at least among social scientist, is that whenever possible social politics should be based on scientific knowledge. The line of thought I develop in this volume leads to a contrary thesis: in the interests of advancing fundamental research on human development, basic science needs public policy even more than public policy needs basic science. Moreover, what is required is not merely a complementary relation between these two domains but their functional integration. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8)

To summarize, social scientists have not spent enough time looking at people behaving in *real* situations. If we had we would have realized the importance of the situation itself as a major determinant of behavior. We also would have realized much earlier that most of our “observation posts,” whether they are the laboratory, the testing or counseling situation, or classroom, offer distorted views of human behavior precisely because both observer and observed are aware of the evaluative nature of the situation. To be observed under rules laid down by the observer demands *unreal* behavior from the observed. An ecological orientation would strongly urge that educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and rehabilitation workers learn to watch first, and measure and evaluate later. Hopefully, watching, rather than measuring, human behavior will take on the importance it deserves. (Mitchell, 1970, p. 16)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) provided a framework to understanding an individual’s development nature in relationship to its ecological environment. In addition, the ecological environment is significant to the development of the individual. Therefore, it is crucial for any study of human behavior to include the subject’s ecology – role, setting and interaction among them.

Significance of Self-identification: William Lamb’s Story

Yvonne Shinhoster Lamb, Washington Post, 9 September 1991

William, my then 4-year-old son, announced while riding a department store escalator: “I want to be White. Whites are good. If my family is White, then I would be White.”

“Being Black . . . being an African-American isn’t good. That’s the reason why,” he said as I explored what prompted this revelation.

In response to a question about what is wrong with being a Black person, he pointed his finger and pretended to shoot.

Somewhere along the line, my son had received messages that being a Black person in America was not something to cherish, that his smooth caramel-colored skin made him one of the undesirables. Somewhere in this 4-year-old psyche he had come to the conclusion that to be happy, to achieve success, to reap life's bounty he needed to be White.

My conscious efforts to imbue my son with a positive sense of himself and his race had failed. The books, the plays, the paintings, the historic sites that bespeak a proud past and a promising future seemed to have made no impact.

William's story is not an uncommon phenomenon which occurs with individuals establishing their self image (Grambs, 1965). Individuals learn their self-image, and it is not developed internally but rather derived from countless messages through family, teachers, policemen, storekeepers and other children in neighborhood (Grambs, 1965; Trager & Yarrow, 1952;). "The individual develops different concepts of themselves and that the concept of self is always in terms of degrees of *adequacy*" (Grambs, 1965, p. 12). Societal stigmas or opinions have played an influential role in developing the acceptance and adequacy of an individual. Allport (1954) addressed the plight of African Americans in the 1950s:

over and over again that you were lazy, a simple child of nature, expected to steal, and had inferior blood. Suppose this opinion were forced on you by the majority of your fellow-citizens. And suppose nothing you could do would change this opinion-because you happen to have black skin. (p. 142)

The message ironically is still portrayed in the voice of William, a four-year-old child in the 1990s. These societal stigmas continue to manifest within the school environment.

The attitude of the educators toward students will affect the outcomes of student performance (Elmore, 2002). Previous research defined this correlation between attitudes of educators and alienated groups of students in terms of performance.

Our hypothesis is that the chief cause of the low achievement of the children of alienated groups is the fact that too many teachers and principals honestly believe

that these children are educable only to an extremely limited extent. And when teachers have a low expectation level for their children's learning, the children seldom exceed that experience, which is a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Niemeyer, 1963, p. 81)

Furthermore, disadvantaged groups need educational experience that heightens success of individuals in which they can identify.

The Negro child, from the earliest school entry through graduation from high school, needs to continue opportunities to see himself and his racial group in a realistically positive light. He needs to understand what color and race mean, he needs to learn about those of his race (and other disadvantaged groups) who have succeeded, and he needs to clarify his understanding of his own group history and current group situation. (Grambs, 1965, p. 21)

The child with a negative view of self will not profit from school experiences because they do not have context self (Grambs, 1965). "The way a person views himself is the way he will behave" (p. 11).

Racial Naming and Labeling

If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public; if he cannot send his children to the best public school available; if, in short he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? (Kennedy, 1963, "A Time to Act" address to American People)

In our society, labels play a central role in describing groups and individuals who belong to those groups. "Nomenclature choice is strongly influenced by generations" (Smith, 1992, p. 503). Racial or ethnic nomenclatures serve as a source of pride and a badge of cultural identity; however, nomenclature can be a focus of negative attitudes by those in conflict within a community (Hanks & Hodges, 1990; Williams, 1990). The naming labels have been prevalent for racial and ethnic groups, in particular African-Americans (Smith, 1992). "Black culture is creative and transformative, taking from the

mainstream culture as well as other American cultural traditions, but at the same time maintaining and evolving, if you will, its own distinctiveness” (Spears, 1987, p. 49).

Over the years, the African-American community has struggled to reach a consensus over the nomenclature of group identity. The terms "colored," "Negro," "Black," "Afro-American," "people of color," and "African American" have all been used. Many of these names have now gone out of favor with a majority of African Americans. For a number of people the term "Black" is no longer an acceptable tag, while for others, "Black is Beautiful" still rings true. In the academic world, scholarly writers often tend to use the terms African American and Black interchangeably. (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, Winter 2005/2006, pp. 38-39)

Blacks throughout the century redefined and renamed themselves moving from the label of “Colored to Negro” to “Black to African Americans” (Smith, 1992). The redefinition of Blacks is not only about labeling but “to gain the respect and a standing in a society that held them to be subordinate and inferior” (Smith, 1992, p. 496). Blacks’ journey began in America with slavery as they were involuntarily revoked from their native lands (Smith, 1992). As Blacks touched American soil, they lost their “core personal identities,” entire heritage, kinship, and language that were systematically destroyed over time (Smith, 1992). Although Blacks established their own communities and institutions, over time they adopted various racial labels to define themselves (Smith, 1992). Despite these variations, “. . . the common goal for Blacks has been to find a group label that instilled group pride and self-esteem” (Smith, 1992, p. 497).

The transformation from “Colored” to “Negro” began in the late 19th century and was directed by prominent Black leaders such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois (Smith, 1992). The movement away from the labeling term “Colored” was because the term was seen “as more inclusive, covering mulattoes and others of mixed racial ancestry as well as those with complete Black ancestry” (Smith, 1992, p. 497).

Bennett (1970) stated that the term “Colored” was used during the time of Black emancipation while the term “Negro” was during Civil War with freed men. Ultimately, the term “Negro” was accepted by society because it was more inclusive, grammatically more versatile and could be used as an adjective and noun in the singular and the plural (Smith, 1992).

The terms “Negro” to “Black” began transforming around the late 1950s early 1960s and took a strong hold in the 1970s. “The term “Black” was initially favored by radical and militant Blacks in such groups as the Black Muslims and Black Panthers” (Smith, 1992, p. 499). The leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Stokely Carmichael, encouraged the abandonment of the term “Negro” replacing with the term Black in his speeches and his 1967 book, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (Smith, 1992). The label Black, strength and power, was favored because of the natural balance it provided to the term White (Allen, 1990). “Black Power” had the same assertion that was made about “Negro” versus “Colored” a generation earlier (Smith, 1992).

Although, the acceptance of the new label Black was a victory for the Black community at that time, the term black has a strong association with evil (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1966). Williams (1966) suggested the efforts to “reverse the conventional symbolism by associating black with goodness and white with badness” would fail “in a culture where the symbolism of white as good and black as bad is so thoroughly entrenched in literature, religion, the mass media” (p. 539). Despite this negative shadow, the label “Black” was not merely a substitute for the label “Negro;” therefore,

“the term had helped to instill and maintain a sense of group consciousness, racial pride and a hope for racial justices” (Smith, 1992, p. 503).

The progression of the label from “Black” to “African American” did not occur until the late 1980s. The label switching began at a meeting in December 1988 when, Ramona H Edelin, president of the National Urban Coalition, proposed that the term “African American” replace the term “Black” (Smith, 1992). Other prominent Black leaders including Jesse Jackson took the term “African American” and equated it to Arab American, Chinese American and Jewish American. The connection of Black heritage to a mother country emphasized their “cultural integrity” (Smith, 1992). The increased usage of the label “African American” instead of label “Negro” was frequently evident in print media during 1982-1995, in the *New York Times* (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1997). The acceptances of the label “African American” are also reflected in the judicial system favoring its use over the label “Negro”:

The first use of the word "African American" in a written decision of the Supreme Court was by Justice Harry A. Blackmun in a 1992 case, *Georgia v. McCollum* (505 U.S. 42). Since that time, the use of "African American" has been more frequent than the use of "Negro." Although the term "Negro" still appears in Supreme Court decisions, it is almost always in a direct quote from a prior case. As of January 1, 1997, only Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy, and David H. Souter had never written an opinion in which they used the term "African American." (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1997, p. 14)

Recent transition of terms Black to African American is movement away from genetically based differences of a race to be treated as a cultural identification of heritage and ancestral homeland of an ethnic group (Smith, 1992).

Fairchild’s (1985) study illustrated a connection of labeling to negative stereotyping images with the term “Black,” “Negro,” and “Afro-Americans” among

White subjects. Fairchild's (1995) findings illustrated that the label "Black" is more frequently stereotyped with negative traits while "Afro-American" was less so. The label "Black" was viewed as rude, loud, and lazy. However, the "Afro-American" label was more frequently described as talkative in comparison to labels "Negroes" and "Blacks." Brown (1999) found that younger and highly educated respondents tended to be more likely to choose evolving labels. In Brown's study the respondents who preferred the label Black were more likely to be younger males with higher levels of education and income. On the other hand, the respondents who preferred the label Colored were the older men with the lowest level of education and income. Individuals who are more militant and who perceived most Whites as discriminatory created the newly popular labels. Additionally, Niven and Zilber (1998) found a relationship between political ideology and racial label. Individuals classified as liberal were found to be more likely to choose the label African American over Black. Therefore, allowing students to self identify their labels creates an understanding of their ecology and their associations with racial attitudes.

In conclusion, every African American must struggle and grapple with the question "Who am I?" in a way no ethnic group can ever know (Silberman, 1964). Smith (1992) concurred that labeling for African American is more important and less certain than other ethnic groups because:

1. their enslavement had stripped them of their indigenous identities,
2. the enslaved Blacks lacked a collective self-designation that corresponded to how Whites saw them (as a homogenous race) rather than as members of different cultures, tribes, and language groups – they lacked a common indigenous term that corresponded to their social definition in America, and

3. as slaves Blacks were long prevented from developing their own institutions and community organizations to advance their group identity. (p. 511)

Therefore, the African American would respond to the question "Who am I?" in terms of who Whites think the Black man is " (Silberman, 1964, p. 238).

Gender

"You cannot like the praying mantis you are a girl," said a fifth grade boy to me when I was visiting one of the elementary schools. His statement caused me to reflect upon a time when my sister's female counselor in high school during the 1980s steered her and other female students to nursing despite their desire to attend medical school. Clearly society has not evolved if a fifth grader in the year 2007 still has distinct ideas of gender roles and educators who guide students to society's gender appropriate roles.

Masculinity and femininity are not character traits or social roles which are learned during childhood and adolescence, and which are fixed and intransigent in adult life. Instead, they are ongoing social processes dependent upon systematic restatement, a process which is variously referred to as "performing gender" or "doing gender work." (Johnson, 1997, p. 22)

Linnaeus originated the practice of using the ♂ - (shield and arrow) Mars and ♀ - (hand mirror) Venus glyphs as the symbol for male and female (Desfayes, 2005). Gender was typically used for biological sex (Acker, 1992). Biological interpretations of masculine and feminine do not adequately deal with the category's variations (Scantlebury, 1998). Lorber (1994) described gender from a social and relational continuum instead of a categorical. "In other words gender only exists as a comparative quality (a person can be either more or less masculine, or more or less feminine than someone else regardless of biological sex)" (Scantlebury, 1998, p. 101). Gender is a social construction whereby "men and women are represented as naturally different categories of persons" (Miles, 1989, p. 88). Biological and sexual characteristics are identified as absolute differences, which serve as justification for and conclusion about

differential social, economic and political participation in society (Cockburn, 1983; Miles, 1989; Ng, 1993).

Historically, gender studies in education focused on the experiences and outcomes for women, while men were considered no gender (Davis, 1999; Scantlebury, 1998). The absence of Black male students' experiences in existing literature is not recorded, misunderstood, or simply ignored. This suggests the experience of Black males is displayed through the lenses of racial hostility and stereotyping (Davis, 1994).

“Masculinity,” like “whiteness” does not appear to be cultural/historical category at all, thus rendering invisible the privileged position from which (white) men in general are able to articulate their interest in the exclusion of the interests of women, men and women of color, and children. (Hanke, 1992, p. 186)

Black masculinity projected by media and social scientists is rarely portrayed as academic super achievers; instead, African American males are categorized as super athletes, entertainers, and clowns (White & Cones, 1999). Many popular cultural themes perpetuated the thoughts that “men of color are constructed as criminal, violent, lascivious, irresponsible, and not particularly smart” (Delgado & Stefanic, 1995, p. 211); “the reputation of being subhuman and animalistic with hypersexuality reputations” (Franklin, 1993, p. 151); “demanding image of black men as childlike, as in the White American reference to them as ‘boys’ or the slow-witted, lazy, happy-go-lucky creatures fawning on the goodwill of their masters,’ the Sambos of American popular culture” (Edley & Wetherell, 1995, p. 151). Despite the visibility of African American males in the United States, there is little understood about their everyday experiences and lives (Franklin 1991; Staples, 1986). There have been a growing number of studies focusing

on emerging masculinities in relation to schooling; however, the perspective of Black men themselves is missing (Price, 2000).

White and Cones (1999) defined African American males as reaching for a new code of masculinity known as “going for bad.” This new code of masculinity for African American males is involved with physical and psychological toughness and aggressiveness that emphasized the “image of being in control.” African American males have been popularized and romanticized as being unafraid of death, posing a toughness and aggressiveness that is combined with street wisdom in order to aspire and live up to these images (White & Cones, 1999). In most urban settings with a high concentration of Blacks and poverty, there is a unique platform for understanding the construction and deconstruction of Black masculinities (Murtadha-Watts, 2000). Often this means that poor communities are not involved in the educational decision-making that affects their students (Pollard & Ajirofutu, 2000).

Masculinity was defined in terms of highly desirable sociopsychological traits or personality propensities. In the gender trait theory of masculinity, White males, as compared to White females, Black males, and Black females, were believed to possess greater psychobiological potential in logical thinking, leadership, ability to plan ahead, resourcefulness, and emotional control. Additional characteristics associated with White male masculinity included assertiveness, toughness (physically and psychologically), dominance, decisiveness, independence, ambitiousness, self-reliance, forcefulness, reliability and analytical ability, and competitiveness. While most psychologists now believe that these traits are learned during the socialization process, the theory that the

traits are associated with gender and are inherited was a generally held belief in science and popular culture until well into the 1960s (White & Cones, 1999, p. 32).

“To grow into a healthy man, a boy must develop a close bond with his mother so he can learn about his own humanity; and then he must be taken by his father to discover what it means to be a man” (Elium & Elium, 1992, pp. 91-92). Impoverished Black males who are raised predominantly in female homes are viewed less than human by society and more as exotic and sexually deviant (Whately, 1993). The matriarchal culture began during the time of slavery and colonialism in the United States where Black males were symbolically castrated and emasculated thereby producing young men bonding together in unruly and violent ways due to the absence of a predominant father figure (Marriott, 1996). The development of Black masculinity was irreversibly affected by slavery and colonialism which has impacted the political, economic, social issues and educational challenges facing Black males.

Feedback from others can validate or invalidate a person’s sense of achievement and hopes within a social context (Corbin & Pruitt, 1999). Harris (1995) stated that African American males develop a sense of pessimism toward their future due to frequent encounters with violence, police harassment and incarceration, and the absences of positive feedback from the academic environment and the media. Many young improvised Black boys have been socialized to believe that physical strength and stamina are valued; therefore, education is not valued and will not help them survive (Hooks, 2004a).

Price (2000) concluded that few studies view race, class, and gender as the lens to reflect the range of experiences of young African American men and their relationship

with school. “Different gender and class interest within minority and majority groups often cut at right angles to racial politics”(Crichlow & McCarthy, 1993, p. xx). School environment plays an integral role in the development of male masculinity (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Kuzmic, 2000). Teenagers are learning not only powerful messages about their gender and sexuality from the hidden curriculum but formulating acceptable gender behaviors (Mandel & Shakeshaft, 2000). “Textbooks may appear to be (indeed they are) more representative and inclusive of women, the construction of curricular knowledge continues to define masculinity in ways that support and reproduce patriarchy” (Kumic, 2000, p. 105). Fletcher (1994) argued that boys suffer many disadvantages in life “because of the way society (including education) encourages certain type of ‘maleness’” (p. xii).

Fletcher (1994) argued the difficulty for the development of male masculinity begins with school cultures that promote the value of “work over home, paid work over voluntary work, production over health and welfare, rationality over emotionality and competition over cooperation” (p. ii). Young men who do not value taking non-technology subjects or interpersonal communication skills instead thrive on the competitive and aggressive issues of male sport (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Another study conducted by Price (2000) examined the relationship between African American students and their school environment. Price (2000) found that school is a source of their current ambitions; however, the students felt a disconnection and were unable to express themselves.

The conflict with gender is evident in curriculum and delivery of curriculum; in particular, the focus of curriculum theory of oedipally (Pinar, 1999). Examining the

American pedagogy in the 19th and 20th centuries schools, Grumet (1988) found that growing numbers of female teachers led to “the feminization of teaching;” therefore, feminization functions to ensure “pedagogy for patriarchy” (pp. 165-184). Additionally, Grumet (1988) states that male administrators elicit help from female teachers to condition students for specific roles, boys to become docile, efficient workers, and the girls to become willing, grateful housewives and full-time mothers. Pinar (1999) proposed a simple question:

“What is the oedipal status of reproduction theory, and of its offspring, resistance theory? In a word, I see them as analyses of the heterosexual son as he observes how the authority of the Father is reproduced and can be resisted. The oedipal function of such theory is parallel to the action of the heterosexual son: the replacement, someday, of the Father. Heterosexual sons become fathers, and fathers require sons, daughters, and wives, all metaphors for under classes. Father is reproduced, regardless of the rhetoric of horizontal social relations (i.e., brotherhood and sisterhood). Educationally, resistance theory, née reproduction theory, appears confined to altering the content of curriculum but not its political consequences. The conversation of father may change but not his position at the dinner table. Schooling in this sense is the story of the sons’ and daughters’ initiation into the father’s ways, and their consignment of the mother, sometimes with her complicity, to the status of unpaid or underpaid laborer and sexual slave. The family drama is the cultural-historical drama writ small and concretely. (pp 103-104)

The challenge of this research was not just to merely highlight Black masculinity in school science but to provide strategies to increase participation in science. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the research are beneficial to educators and Black male students who will soon become adults craving the need for a dialogue and foundation to change the plight for many around them. The major purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the past in order to understand the complex phenomenon of students engaging in science (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003) specifically through the oral histories of six self-identified African American males enrolled in a high school

Advanced Placement Biology class and the oral histories about events that followed during their post high school experiences. To elucidate an understanding of this phenomenon, this research explored the ecology of African American males' descriptions of their school science, their peer school science community, their lived experiences during and after graduation, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

There is no burden of proof. There is only the world to experience and understand. Shed the burden of proof to lighten the load for the journey of experience. (Halcolm's Laws of Inquiry, a.k.a. Patton, 2002, p. 2)

Qualitative Study

Imagine the journey that sperm, the smallest cells in the human body, must endure. Sperm rushes in the ocean of semen with three million ejaculated rivals, just to penetrate the surface of the female egg, the largest cell in the human body. As these two cells fuse into one, it begins to trigger a series of cell divisions that finally evolve into an embryo. Should this dynamic force of life be evaluated quantitatively or qualitatively? During the next five years, as the child develops should their experience be measured quantitatively or qualitatively? Should we interview and observe or measure utilizing instruments that yield only numbers? To what extent can one evaluate a life that has infinite possibilities for thoughts, experiences, and ideas beyond a narrow snap shot? In other words, quantitative methods are the numbers on our tombs which date the birth and death of an individual; whereas, qualitative methods describe the information between the dates which are noted as the dash in between.

(The Researcher, Katrina Halasa)

Traditional quantitative research heavily relies upon a large sample size (N); objective methodology and the data collected are converted into numerical codes that can be statistically analyzed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Qualitative research is more than numbers, and it lends itself to explore the motivation behind the phenomenon being investigated. "Neither science nor art can exist outside of experience, and experience requires a subject matter. That subject matter is qualitative" (Eisner, 1998, p. 27). The uses of qualitative methods provide a richer view of the subject matter by facilitating the

“study of issues in depth and detail” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). The use of a qualitative approach allowed the researcher richer insight into the reasons behind the quantitative, generalizable, statistical low numbers of African American males who are not entering the field of science.

The existing literature lacks a “close-up view” (Creswell, 1998, p. 20) of research on theories about the underrepresentation of African American males in the field of science. The alarming statistical data do not provide educators with an understanding of the African American male’s perspective; therefore, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate to explore this perspective (Creswell, 1998). This research abandoned the quantitative approach that has traditionally examined African American males with a “wide-angle lens or the distant panoramic shot” (p. 17). This has not yet provided the answers to the low numbers of African American males in science. This qualitative study, therefore, examined narratives of African American males to gain a better understanding of their perspective about school-related science.

Engaging in narratives allowed “the participant’s view rather than as an ‘expert’ who passes judgment on participants. We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret” (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). The researcher employed the use of a qualitative study which provided the “sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed data analysis of ‘text’ information” (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argued that the qualitative researcher “stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 8). Ragin (1987) characterized qualitative researchers as relying on a few cases and many variables, while

quantitative researchers rely on many cases and few variables. This study examined the lives of six African American males once students in an Advanced Placement Biology course in which the researcher was the instructor.

The understanding of qualitative research has evolved over time. Previous researchers have agreed upon three characteristics of qualitative research: (1) natural setting (field focus) is the direct source of data, (2) analysis of data is inductive; attention is given to particulars that have been gathered and grouped together instead of proving or disproving a hypothesis before entering the study, and (3) focus on participants' perspectives, their meanings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000; Eisner, 1991; Merriam, 1988). Researchers, however, disagreed on certain nuances of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) focused on a multimethod approach centered around "the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives" (p. 2). Creswell (1998) argued qualitative research as a "distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem." (p. 15). Finally, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) redefined qualitative research as locating the observer in the world and the understanding of the empirical and the meanings people assign to them.

Qualitative research, utilized in this study, yielded meaningful insights behind the theory of teaching in a science classroom (Eisner, 1998). These results are reported and addressed in terms of theoretically significant justifiable variables (Kirk & Miller, 1986). In using qualitative research an "experience is reported in such a way that it is accessible

to others; for example, when reporting an experiment, every effort is made to describe the way the experiment was carried out, just in case somebody else would like to try the same thing” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, pp. 13-14). Therefore, this qualitative research attempted to unite theory with applications in terms of a science classroom of one particular teacher.

Reliability and validity are approached differently in qualitative than in quantitative research. Reliability is the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer independent of accidental circumstances (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Quantitative research has a structured form of collection which ensures reliability of their analyses. In contrast, qualitative research is a collection of raw data in a relatively unstructured form: tape recordings or transcripts of conversations (Mays & Pope, 1995). “The main ways in which qualitative researchers ensure the retest reliability of their analyses is in maintaining meticulous records of interviews and observations and by documenting the process of analysis in detail” (Mays & Pope, 1995, p.110).

Validity for quantitative research depends on the instrument used to ensure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Patton, 2002). The instrument used must be administered in an appropriate, standardized manner according to the prescribed procedures; therefore, the focuses are on the test items, survey questions, or other measurement tools (Patton, 2002). Validity is addressed in a qualitative research “by degree the findings are interpreted in a correct way” by the researcher, “sees what he or she thinks he or she sees” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, pp. 20-21). The researcher is the instrument for a qualitative research (Patton, 2002).

Overall, reliability and generalizability play a minor role in qualitative inquiry in comparison to validity (Creswell, 2003). Validity is the strength of qualitative research because it determines whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lastly, the overarching consideration in conducting a qualitative study is trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Trustworthiness is defined:

The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? Conventionally, inquirers have found it useful to pose four questions to themselves:

1. "Truth value": How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?
2. Applicability: How can one determine the extent to which the findings a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?
3. Consistency: How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) context?
4. Neutrality: How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer? (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290)

Trustworthiness is developed within the competence of the researcher. "All researchers take sides, or are partisans for one point or another" (Denzin, 1989, p. 23).

Before interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated, the researcher stated hermeneutical circle of the situation by investigating the parts of the basic facts of whole research phenomenon (Denzin, 1989). The researcher must validate the procedures

established by developing a “track record” of the quality work (Patton, 2002). The data are directly tied to the trustworthiness of the researcher who collects and analyzes the data.

Authenticity was being balanced, fair, and conscientious of multiple perspectives, interests, and realities (Patton, 2002). The research utilized the words of participants and stated the language that was reflective of cultural sensitivity (Creswell, 2003). Peer debriefing was utilized to enhance the authenticity of the narratives, as well with another colleague who was a staff at the high school of the participants (Creswell, 2003). The negative or discrepant information is presented and discussed to add to the multiple facets of the emerging themes.

Credibility of a qualitative study depends on three distinct but related inquiry elements: (1) the rigorous methods, (2) the credibility of the researcher, and (3) the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). The rigorous method utilized in the research study was systematically analyzed in order to yield high quality data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Patton 2002). The researcher’s training, experience, track records, status, and presentation of self are vital to credibility of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 2002). Additionally, the researcher valued qualitative methods that utilize purposeful sampling and inductive analysis to embrace a holistic thinking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002).

“Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language on their own terms” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 9). The perspective gained from qualitative research is more in depth and detailed in the understanding of relationships

and is often more personal than quantitative analysis (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003, p. 254). The approach of a qualitative research is justified because the ultimate goal is not to create a standardized relationship but rather provide a meaningful insight into each participant interviewed (Maxell & Loomis, 2003). Therefore, in this study the use of oral histories, a qualitative methodology, was an opportunity to lend a voice to individuals who are underrepresented in science because “oral histories offer a glimpse into the life styles, belief systems, and values of ordinary people” (Grele, 1975, p. 3).

Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets.

Oakley (1981, p 41)

Method

At 3:00 a.m. Monday October 23, “Katrina, Sarah is brain dead and you should come to hospital now,” said the voice on the other end of the phone. I quickly and quietly exited my house. As I began my drive to Canton Timken Mercy Hospital, the question of “What if?” began to consume me. Shouting fiercely, “Sarah, don’t leave us just yet!” I tried to drown my thoughts by listening to the radio; however, the song that came on reminded me of the times when Sarah and I would try to decipher the lyrics.

After spending the rest of the night at the hospital, I arrived home in time to shower quickly dash off and to teach my afternoon classes at North High School. As I began my second week as their new third substitute teacher that fall, I explained politely to my students why I had nothing prepared for class. The next three days, my time was spent comforting friends and family at the hospital as I taught school to the best of my ability. Ironically, even my most challenging class was cooperative.

By Wednesday, I was emotionally ready to talk to my classes in more detail. During my fifth period class, I was explaining medically what was happening, and that the family’s choice was to discontinue life support. I told my students that I loved my friend Sarah. She was like another sister, and I shared stories about her. One of my students asked, “What is the difference between being in-love and loving someone.” Just as I was about to tell them my version of the difference, Lawrence stood up and said to class “Be quiet! Miss Halasa is older than us.” Snapping his fingers in a Z formation, he replied, “She has wisdom.”

After sharing my story, I vividly remember my hellish seventh period class comforting me. As tears began to trickle down my face, one of my students attempted to help me, “Miss Halasa, just let go!” I just began to cry and before I knew it, all of the students began to passionately share their own stories. (The Researcher, Halasa)

Stories can lend emotional insight into a moment in history. Stories are powerful and can evoke the reader to feel or think about life in a new way, an opportunity to relive the story in relation to their own perspective (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Sarah’s story evoked a powerful response from the students, allowing them to share their own touching stories. As asserted by Reissman (1993), “Nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do” (p. 2). In a sense, narratives produce a bridge allowing the readers to put themselves inside the story of others and interact with their construction of reality (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). These constructed individual realities are created through personal narratives, life histories, and family stories which reveal cultural and social patterns (Patton, 2002). Therefore, this “long and respectable tradition” (p. 1) calls for oral records to emerge.

“Historians have long felt that written documents lack human direction and spontaneity. Pre-censored and prepared for special purposes, they reveal only formal relationships” (Harris, 1975, p. 1). In order to understand and obtain a complete picture of accurate history, formal documents must be supplemented with oral accounts of history. Oral histories are not a new method and are dated as far back as 3,000 years ago when scribes of the Zhou dynasty in China collected the sayings of the people for the use of court historians; however, the skepticism of validity and reliability of oral testimony dates back equally as far. One such critic, Thucydides, complained that “different eye-

witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories” (Moss, 1988, p. 5; Moss & Mazikana, 1986, p. 2; Thucydides, 1972, p. 48).

One may question the reliability of oral histories. Ritchie (2003) stated “the most naïve policeman knows that a witness should not always be taken at his word” (p. 26). Furthermore, Ritchie (2003) emphasized that oral history is as reliable or unreliable as other research sources; “. . . no single piece of data of any sort should be trusted completely, and all sources need to be tested against other evidence” (p. 26). Although, archival documents do not change over time or are influenced by later events, the disadvantages of archival documents are that they may be “incomplete, inaccurate, and deceiving” (p. 26). Local newspapers prior to the 1960s ignored entire segments of the communities, in particular the Black communities by reflecting the prominent historic views of societies at that time (Ritchie, 2003). A result of utilizing only these written works, blind spots or gaps can exist in the literature, which allows oral histories to thrive and contribute new information.

The development of new technology served as a catalyst which aided in the increase usage of oral histories. The first major breakthrough in oral histories was the use of tape recorders for interviews. The tape recorders allowed historians to free themselves “from the institutional constraints imposed by collections of written sources and documents” which “narrowed the once-enormous gap” in histories (Grele, 1975, pp. 1-3). The recorded words are not enough to fully comprehend the significance or meaning of the testimony; therefore, the researcher is essential in interpreting the recorded words.

The advantage of oral histories is achieved through the collections of preserved memories, personal commentaries, and interviews that are recorded (Grele, 1975). The recorded interviews are of well-prepared interviewer that questions an individual which “inspires the narrator to begin the act of remembering, jogs memory and records, and presents the narrator’s words” (Ritchie, 2003; Yow, 1994, p. 3). Despite the structure of the interviewer’s questions, the in-depth interview is guided by the informant, who is given the leeway to answer as they choose and to provide meaning to their experience (Yow, 1994). The flexibility of the in-depth interviews and the understanding of these events allow oral history to give deeper meaning to events in history.

The evidence provided by the recorded oral interviews is not static in nature (Yow, 1994). The researcher does not use “an unchangeable testing instrument;” however, the researcher must be observant of “the informant’s choice of behaviors” (Yow, 1994, p. 6). As the result, the interviewers must be “conscious of what their subjects represent” and the interviewers needs to be aware of “their own judgments about the historical process” (Grele, 1975, p. 5). Qualitative research is not limited by the strict use of a hypothesis, but rather the hypothesis of qualitative research changes and evolves throughout the interviewing process, allowing a hypothesis to take shape.

The use of oral history lends voice to individuals who are often ignored by societies and who are members of all socioeconomic levels. Traditional methods of examining history involves the interpretation of surviving documents, and those documents that are of a more personal, local or unofficial nature are less likely to survive or be studied by historians (Thompson, 1988).

Unlike diaries, letters and personal papers that were themselves responses to the event or period being studied, interviews are created after the fact and reflect the participants' self-conscious attempts to preserve what they remember for the future. . . . At minimum they involve the subject's view of the historical process and of his or her place in it. (Harris, 1975, p. 5)

The viewpoints of the non-elite "who do not leave memoirs or have biographers" are neglected by history but not forgotten by oral history (Yow, 1994, p. 10). The testimonies in oral histories cast a net of importance over the waves of paper, and allow these public documents to be more understandable. Otherwise, the official documents that survived the test of time will shape a view of the past to reflect the views of the elite through the legal documents (Thompson, 1988).

The methodology of oral history has many limitations that need to be considered by the researcher. The four limitations that need to be addressed are (1) the informant's recall, (2) accuracy of the oral statement, (3) bias, and (4) the ability to generalize the results to a larger population. As with all research, evidence must be empirically verified and cautiously considered. "A statement is not necessarily truer if written down at the time than if recalled later in testimony" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 117).

The ability of the informant to recall the event in question is one of the prominent concerns in regards to oral histories. The researcher must consider the research topic under consideration, the way the questions are being asked, and how the topic relates to the informants' life (Yow, 1994). Some informants may recall events that took place decades ago and can still speak authentically about those events (Ritchie, 2003).

Memory for some informants may not be as clear, however, because memories "serve the sense of self and its continuity; it entertains us; it shames us; it pains us. Memory can tell our origins; it can be explanatory; and it can deceive" (Butler, 1964, p. 267).

In addition to recall, memory is selective; therefore, addressing the issue of accuracy is crucial in oral history (Yow, 1994). Informants recall selective segments of events that they deem important though the researcher may not find the significance of that segment (Ritchie, 2003). The researcher must be cognizant to “how much the narrator [informant] slanted the story to make it interesting or at least acceptable to the interviewer” (Yow, 1994, p. 18). Informants tend to be more candid of event as time passes which may skew the testimony (Yow, 1994). Hence, the consistency of testimony and the ability to relate factual information to the testimony is necessary to ensure accuracy. “Accuracy (the degree of conformity with other accounts) can be checked by consulting other sources and comparing accounts” (Yow, 1994, p. 21).

The third major concern of oral history is bias. Bias refers to both the informant’s and the interviewer’s perception of the event in question. Informants tend to reevaluate, reexamine, and re-explain their past events or decision (Yow, 1994). The interviewer emphasizes segments of story that build theme(s) of event in question. As historians incorporate new evidence into existing history, informants use information gained from current events to reshape their understanding of past experiences (Yow, 1994). “History is what the people who lived it make of it and what the others who observe the participants or listen to them or study their records make of it. Likewise, contemporary society does not exist outside human consciousness: Our definition of it is what is” (Yow, 1994, p. 22).

A qualitative researcher gathers detailed information from informants to form categories or themes which “developed into broad patterns, theories, or generalizations that are then compared with personal experiences or with existing literature on the topic”

(Creswell, 2003, p. 133). Recorded life or oral histories data have limits for generalizations to extrapolations and transferability. “The trouble with generalizations is that they don’t apply to particulars” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 110). Generalizability in oral history data is weakened due to the use of small size purposeful sampling. Furthermore, the question of “the ability to generalize from the testimonies - lies in the selectivity of narrators: It is the articulate who come forward to be participants” (Yow, 1994, p. 17).

Despite the aforementioned limitations of oral history, this approach was most beneficial to construct a rich detailed description and understanding of the central phenomenon examined in this study (Creswell, 2003). These carefully selected informants have revealed rich-in-depth information (Patton, 2002). The qualitative data of oral history narratives were based on information-rich samples that are “logical, thoughtful, case-derived, and problem-oriented rather than statistical and probabilistic” (Patton, 2002, p. 584). The oral history data collected produced useful extrapolation, “that is, studies that are relevant information carefully targeted to specific concerns about both the present and the future” (Patton, 2002, p. 584). Hence, the researcher discovered themes that were grounded in information from the informants in “pattern theories” or “generalizations” representing interconnected thoughts or parts linked to a whole that do not emphasize logical deductive reasoning but an inductive approach (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1998; Neuman, 2000; Stake 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Of course, though again not in usual sense [quantitative study]. Our lives are particular, but they also are typical and generalizable, since we, all participate in a limited number of cultures and institutions. We want to convey both in our stories. A story’s generalizability is constantly being tested by readers as they determine if it speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others

they know. Likewise, does it tell them about unfamiliar people or lives? Does a work have what Stake calls ‘naturalistic generalization,’ meaning that it brings ‘felt’ news from one world to another and provides opportunities for the reader to have vicarious experience of the things told? (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751)

The research and findings attempted to make sense of six self-identified African American males’ experiences before and after taking Advanced Placement Biology course. At the outset of this study, the overarching question of what is occurring with African American males in science was addressed, and more importantly, this research delved into the causal factors behind this occurrence. In order to elicit the school science ecology, the study inquired into African American males’ description of their school science, their peer school science community, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The approach of oral history revealed rich insight into the lives of these informants, allowing for a discussion of everyday occurrences which are often overlooked. These discussions revolved around their “daily life at home and at work - the very stuff that rarely gets into any kind of public record; informal, unwritten rules of relating to others that characterize any group, and finally address the ramifications of personal relationships that do not get told in official documents” (Yow, 1994, p. 13). Therefore, the in-depth oral histories personal narratives allowed the researcher “dual identities of academic and personal ‘self’” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740) in order to chronicle the journey of African American males’ own daily life experiences. The narratives of these six informants addressed the crisis of retaining African American males interested in science; however, these problems do not just exist in this school but in all school systems across the United States public and private alike.

“Nothing About Us, Without Us”
(Patton, 2002, p. 335)

Participant Sampling

Purposeful sampling and criterion-based sampling (Merriman, 1988; Patton, 2002) were utilized in this qualitative study to provide relevant and valuable insight for the researcher to find particular theoretical ideas or themes (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003). The sampling strategy was selected for information-rich cases strategically and purposefully. The criteria for the selection of participants were (1) African American males, (2) who completed an Advanced Placement Biology course, and (3) were willing to participate. In other words, the participants were African American males who experienced the same class at the same time with the same teacher and the participants were the only African American males enrolled at each time period. This helped “develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 165).

The informants in this study consisted of two cohorts of three African American male students who completed the researcher’s Advance Placement Biology course. Cohort I consisted of three seniors enrolled during the 2004-2005 school year. Cohort II consisted of three juniors enrolled during the 2005-2006 school year. The two sets of cohort informants, therefore, provided purposeful sampling needed “to select cases that were likely to be ‘information-rich’ with respect to the purposes of the study” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 165).

The sample in this qualitative study reflected the typically small size found in qualitative research (Gall et al., 2003). “There are no rules for sample size in qualitative

inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). The decision that was made to use two cohort sets of three African American male students as opposed to one allowed the researcher to gain richer and in-depth understanding of African American males in science. Therefore, small informant sample size helped establish manageable data – from preparing and conducting the interviews to processing and transcribing the data – that expanded during the course of the study. “Therefore, trying to interview too many people can produce superficial interviews that will not satisfy research needs” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 46).

The informants in the study were assured confidentiality throughout the research process.

Social scientists employ pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the communities they study. . . . They believe that the anonymity encourages interviewees to speak more candidly and that it protects interviewees, their families, and their jobs from retribution. Oral historians influenced by social science felt a similarly strong need to protect interviewees’ well-being by not revealing their names. They felt that sometimes the general message carries more significance than the particular speaker. (Ritchie, 2003, p. 126)

Pseudonyms were selected by the participants. Cohort I consisted of Mars.B, Zack, and Troy. Cohort II consisted of Roy, Cupid, and D.Will. The researcher chose all the pseudonyms for all the teachers, educators, other classmates, universities/colleges, and elementary/middle/high schools that appeared in the oral history narratives to assure confidentiality and protect individuals in “their jobs from retribution” (Ritchie, 2003, p.126).

Physical environments clearly affect people and programs.
(Patton, 2002, p. 282)

Setting

Since historical artifacts were used in Chapter I, the school system and the high school have already been identified. “Future historians using those interviews will also expect some verification of sources. They will want to know where the information came from and what biases might have affected the testimony” (Ritchie, 2003, pp. 126-127). The research setting was at North High School located in Akron, Ohio which could not have been renamed for this study as it was the setting of a new approach to education. The Akron City School District is one of the largest of eight urban K-12 school districts in the state of Ohio, with an enrollment of over 27,000 students (ODE, 2004-2005, 2005-2006). The district includes 58 K-12 schools; eight of which are comprehensive high schools located throughout the city of Akron. The Akron City School District was rated as achieving Continuous Improvement during both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years; however, it only met Adequate Yearly Progress during the 2004-2005 school year (ODE, 2004-2005, 2005-2006).

Cohort I

Students in Cohort I were among classmates who were not required to have completed pre-requisite coursework prior to enrollment in the Advanced Placement Biology course. Additionally, this was the third year the course was offered at North High School. These three African American males were the first to enroll and complete the course. These students were challenged, as described in Chapter IV, by school staff

to enroll in the course. These three informants were enrolled in Advanced Biology course with 17 other non-Black male students.

The demographics of the 718 member student body at North High School during the 2004-2005 school year for Cohort I were: 52.8% of the students were eligible for free or reduced meals, 22.9% of the students had disabilities, 41.8% African-Americans, Not Calculated (NC) because fewer than 10 students reported, NC American Indian or Native American, 2.1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.4% Hispanic, NC Multi-Racial, and 53% White (ODE, 2004-2005). The graduation rate for the senior class of 2005 was 79.4% for the school, 79.7% district, and 67.0% for the state (ODE, 2004-2005). The average state graduation subject scores were the following when Cohort I were tested during their eighth grade 2000-2001 school year: Reading 75.8%, Math 47.2%, Writing 77.6%, Science 52.8%, and Citizenship 63.6% in comparison to the district scores: Reading 89.1 %, Math 70.4%, Writing 91.4%, Science 54.8%, and Citizenship 61.4%. The state's average scores were the following: Reading 89.1 %, Math 70.4 %, Writing 91.4 %, Science 76.2 %, and Social Studies 80.7%.

Cohort II

Students in Cohort II as a whole freshman class began to be subjected to challenging curriculum with their enrollment in Honors English and Honors History courses. Despite their previous performance, these students were placed in rigorous course work, highlighted in Weigle's (2008) editorial article in Chapter I on page 15 of this study. The main strategy for all freshman and sophomore courses was utilizing the Guskey's Cycle (Guskey, 1997, 2003). Students were instructed in a unit then given an

assessment on its content. Those students who mastered the benchmarks were given enrichment lessons for three days. Those students who did not master the benchmarks were re-taught and given a second assessment opportunity within the same three days. In addition, a policy was enforced that students were unable drop honors and advanced courses throughout their high school career. The three students in Cohort II, therefore, were part of the 30 students enrolled in the Advanced Biology course and were unable to drop the course despite their difficulties or desire to quit and parents request to drop.

The demographics of the 698 student body at North High School during the 2005-2006 school year for Cohort I were: 56.8% per cent of the students were eligible for free or reduced meals and 22.0% of the students had disabilities, 44.0% African-Americans, Not Calculated (NC) because fewer than 10 students reported, American Indian or Native American, 1.9% Asian or Pacific Islander, NC Hispanic, NC Multi-Racial, and 52.2% White (ODE, 2005-2006). Graduation rates of this senior class 2007 were the following: 79.4% for the school, 79.7% district, and 67.0% for the state. The average state graduation subject scores were the following when Cohort I were sophomores: Reading 91.5%, Math 78.4%, Writing 75.6%, Science 64.8%, and Social Studies 68.6%; in comparison to the district scores: Reading 87.8%, Math 72.9%, Writing 78.4%, Science 61.1%, and Social Studies 68.1%. The state's average scores were: Reading 83.6%, Math 64.6 %, Writing 69.0 %, Science 47.5 %, and Social Studies 59.7%.

Science Requirements

According to Ohio Department of Education's graduation policy, students were required to graduate with three credits of science. The first two science credits in Akron

Public School's district are either Honors or Regular Physical Science and Honors or Regular Biochemical System; however, the third science credit was not prescribed. Therefore, the six students enrolled in the Advanced Biology course based upon their own interest, recommendation from their previous science teacher, or an institutional mandate. The motivation behind dividing the informants into two Cohorts was not to compare results but rather to extract emerging themes. Both of these Cohorts represented a small part of a larger problem in the educational system where African American males are not entering the science field.

People only see what they are prepared to see.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Research Design

As the researcher, collector, and interpreter of the data, the researcher examined the phenomenon as the primary instrument or tool of qualitative research (Eisner, 1998; Merriman, 1998; Patton, 2002). The researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under study; the researcher's personal experiences and insight are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon (Patton, 2002, p. 40).

The role of researcher is twofold: (1) attempts to account for what informants deem significant, and (2) records what experiences hold for those in the situation studied (Eisner, 1998). In other words, the kind of detachment that some journals prize - the neutralization of voice, aversion to metaphor and to adjectives, the absence of the first person singular - is seldom a feature of qualitative studies. Qualitative researchers

displayed our signatures. Our signature makes clear that a person, not a machine, was behind the words (Eisner, 1998, p 36). The research presented was focused on the “why”, not the “what”, of African American students in science. In order to elicit the “why”, the researcher utilized one-on-one open interviews.

The in-depth interviews about the life histories of six African American males reflected both what the interviewer seeks and the interviewee wants to tell (Grele, 1975). “The best oral history interview is generally done one-on-one. That way the interviewer can focus exclusively on one person whose stories will not be interrupted” (Ritchie, 1994, p. 62). The advantage of this type of qualitative data collection is that the informants can provide meaningful insights to their experiences (Creswell, 1994).

Ritchie (1994) argued that the ideal time frame for each interview session should not exceed two hours “to avoid exhausting both the interviewee and interviewer” (p. 49). However, due to the openness of the interview process, some interviews exceed the recommended time because the informants’ stories were more robust. In order to capture each informant’s firsthand experiences in Advanced Placement Biology course, the researcher scheduled the interviews for 60 minutes. Several participants, however, used this opportunity to delve deeper or to digress to other related topics, resulting in some interviews lasting up to three hours. “A cardinal rule is to come to the interview thoroughly informed and then to let the subject do the talking” (Grele, 1975, p. 5).

A good oral history will allow the interviewees to “speak their own minds and will not try to shoehorn their responses into a prepared questionnaire or mind-set” (Grele, 1975, p. 32). The goal of interview is to encompass a wide scope of questions in order to capture the informant’s stories. Therefore, the interviewer should create broader

questions to establish links that neither interviewer nor interviewee may have considered (Hoopes, 1979). The researcher composed guide questions sometimes referred to as interview format or plan (Ritchie, 2003). The interview plan has specific topics and specific questions to produce the information needed to obtain, but it is open to the emergence of the unanticipated topics. “The flexibility allows the narrator to teach the interviewer things he or she did not already know, while ensuring that the information the interviewer sought also is obtained” (Yow, 1994, p. 36).

The interviews were open-ended questions in order to probe and yield in-depth responses about people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 2002). “Data consist of verbatim quotations with sufficient context to be interpretable” (Patton, 2002, p. 4). The research interview plans are represented by the following thirteen questions:

1. When filling out an application, in what category would you place yourself in regards to race?
2. What school science courses did you choose to take junior and senior years in high school?
3. What influenced your choices?
4. What did you hear previously before enrolling in AP Biology?
5. Here is the AP Biology Book you used, what do you recall about this course?
6. Here is your course syllabus, what do you recall about this course?
7. How were your grades, what do you recall about this course?
8. What do you recall about the daily structure of the course?
9. What do you recall about the labs performed in this course?
10. What do you recall about the AP exam you took in May? Score?
11. What is your interest in science after taking this course?
12. If you had to give advice to another student about school science, what would you say?
13. What are you presently studying and at what university, and why?

To ensure accuracy the researcher used an audiotape and videotape to record and transcribe the interviews. The informants were informed of the mutual rights and

responsibilities involved in oral history. The tape recorders were used to “radically expand and improve any interview” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 111). Recording diction protects the interviewer to correctly quote their interviewees and provides the opportunity to hear more than they thought they did during the interview itself (Ritchie, 2003). Therefore, the researcher must save the recorded tapes and all videotapes “to preserve gestures and facial expressions, verbal intonations, silences, and breathing rates which can be heard on an ordinary cassette and are also important clues to the emotional affect of the subject” (Grele, 1975, p. 5).

Taped life history should not remain in your study closet: This is social enterprise, and the collection of tapes from your project should be deposited in archives, available to other researchers. Whoever listens to the tape will want to know the background of the speaker will want to place him or her in a specific time and place to understand how the narrator came to do what he or she did. (Yow, 1994, p. 37)

This study recorded the oral histories and experiences of six African-American males during the spring of 2009. A follow-up with a second interview was conducted after transcribing the first transcripts for clarifications, and two prompts were included.

First Prompt: Please read the following quotes and identify which one you agree with and why.

Maxine Green (1978) stated: Learning is one dimension. A conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of affective new connections of experiences a thematic problem rising imposing diverse patterns on an incoherence of things. (p.3)

Glen, Yenny, Bitten, and Britain (1991) stated: Learning is the process of acquiring new knowledge as active and complex. This process results in an act of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization and collaboration. These processes are facilitated in, by construction of conceptual relationships. (p.5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p.1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner, and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, inquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p.xv)

Second Prompt: Historically, being an African American male has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

Interviews were held in locations decided upon by informants. These included a coffee shop, eatery, restaurants, and in the car to and from these locations. Some informants needed transportation to the location. The researcher picked them up from their residences. The IRB was approved prior to conducting the study (see Appendix A). Informants were also advised they could refuse to answer any questions and could withdraw from the study without consequence at anytime.

Subjectivity, the antithesis of scientific inquiry (Patton, 2002), was addressed in this study because the researcher was the teacher in the Advanced Placement Biology course. The researcher utilized a larger sample size of six informants to gain richer collection and analysis of data. The researcher had to listen attentively, understand, and faithfully report others' beliefs both positive and negative regarding the Advanced Placement Biology course (Patton, 2002). Ethics were observed and upheld throughout this study. The informants and the researcher were no longer in a school setting of authority together. There were no direct benefits to the participants; however, the

intangible benefits are that the study will help to add a new body of knowledge in preparation of African American males in science. During the entire research project the following principles were adhered to:

- Do not steal by plagiarizing or claiming the results of others.
- Do not lie by misreporting sources or by inventing results.
- Do not destroy sources or data.
- Do not submit data whose accuracy is questionable.
- Do not conceal objections that cannot be rebutted.
- Do not caricature those with opposing views or deliberately state the participant's views that are rejected.
- Do not write reports in a way that deliberately make it difficult for readers to understand, nor oversimplify that ethics is legitimately complex. (Booth et al., 1995, pp. 225-256)

After the data were collected and transcribed, the informants were asked to review their narratives to insure their interpretations were clearly captured (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The informants were limited to only their narrative. This provided the researcher the chance to amend, clarify, and supplement any responses and perspectives before the formal narratives were submitted as Chapter IV of this dissertation (Ritchie, 2004).

These strategies were implemented in this study to check for accuracy (Creswell, 2004, p. 196):

1. Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.
2. Use member-checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate.
3. Use rich, thick description to convey the findings. This may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences.
4. Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study. The self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers.
5. Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account. This process involves locating a person (a peer debriefer) who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher.

It wasn't curiosity that killed the cat. It was trying to make sense of all the data curiosity generated.

(Halcolm, aka Patton, 2002, p. 440)

Analysis

The very first thing we need to do as nation and as individual members of society is to confront our past. We need to recognize it for what it was and is and not explain away, excuse it, or justify it. Having done that we should then make a good faith effort to turn our history around so that we can see it in front of us, so that we can avoid doing what we have done for so long.

John Hope Franklin, 1993, p. 74

The raw data were collected and transcribed from the taped interviews.

Transcripts were cut and arranged by corresponding themes. “The researcher then finds the links between categories and beings to form organizing schemes” (Yow, 1994, p. 224). Once the data were coded into themes, another peer coder independently reviewed the sorted transcripts against themes. The emerging themes were rearranged in the same order for all six informants to create cohesion for the reader. The newly arranged transcripts were then transformed into narratives that removed the interviewer’s voice and maintained the integrity of the informants’ spoken word, citing the original transcript number lines.

Oral history narratives were then analyzed according to the major themes that depicted the descriptions and interpretations of these informants’ lived world; therefore, it is a continuum that does exist between description and interpretation (Kvale, 1996). This study mirrored the six steps of analysis interviews outlined by Kvale (1996):

A first step is when *subjects describe* their lived world during the interview. They spontaneously tell what they experience, feel, and do in relation to a topic. There is little interpretation or explanation from either the interviewees or the interviewer.

A second step would be that *the subjects themselves discover* new relationships during the interview, see new meanings in what they experience and do. For example, a pupil describing the effects of grading, comes to think of how the grades further a destructive competition among pupils. The interviewees themselves start to see new connections in their life works on the basis of their spontaneous descriptions, free of interpretations by the interviewer.

In a third step, the *interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets* the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and “sends” the meaning back. The interviewee means that” or “That was precisely what I was trying to say.” This dialogue ideally continues till there is only one possible interpretation left, or it is established that the subject has multiple, and possibly contradictory, understandings of “on-the-line interpretation” with the possibility of an “on-the-spot” confirmation or disconfirmation of the interviewer’s interpretations. The result can then be a “self-correcting” interview.

In a fourth step, the *transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer*, either alone or with other researchers. Three parts of this analysis may be discerned; first, structuring the often large and complex interview material for analysis. This is usually done today by transcription and by programs for computer analysis of qualitative material. The next part consists of a clarification of the material, making it amendable to analysis; for example, by eliminating superfluous material such as digression and repetitions, distinguishing between the essential and non-essential. What is essential or non-essential, again, depends on the purpose of the study and its theoretical presuppositions. The analysis proper involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the subjects’ own understandings into the light as well as providing new perspective from the researcher on the phenomena. Five main approaches to the analysis of meaning are condensation, categorization, narrative structuring, interpretation, and ad hoc methods.

A fifth step would be a *re-interview*. When the researcher has analyzed and interpreted the completed interviews, he or she may give the interpretations back so the subjects get an opportunity to comment on the interviewer’s interpretations as well as to elaborate on their own original statements.

A possible sixth step would be to extend the continuum of description and interpretation to include *action*, in that subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during their interview. The research interview may in such cases approximate a therapeutic interview. The changes can also be brought about by actions in a larger social setting such as action research, where the researcher and the subjects together act on the basis of the knowledge produced in the interviews. (pp. 189-190)

Research Focus

The major purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the past in order to understand the complex phenomenon of students engaging in science (Newman et al., 2003) specifically through the oral histories of six self-identified African American males enrolled in a high school Advanced Placement Biology class and the oral histories about events that followed during their post high school experiences. To elucidate an understanding of this phenomenon, this research explored the ecology of African American males' descriptions of their school science, their peer school science community, their lived experiences during and after graduation, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

CHAPTER IV

NARRATIVES

These narratives were created by conducting two oral history interviews on all six informants. All the interviews were transcribed and a sample of an original non-coded transcript is located in the appendices (see Appendix B). The researcher coded the transcribed data into significant theme segments. Then all of the transcripts of the informants were cut and arranged by corresponding themes. Pseudonyms were used throughout the narratives. The new coded transcripts were converted to narratives and written in conversational style. The researcher's interaction during the interview was omitted from the final narratives that are housed in this chapter.

In Cohort I were MarsB, Zack, and Troy. They were among classmates who were not required to have completed pre-requisite coursework prior to their enrollment in the Advanced Placement Biology course. In contrast, the informants in Cohort II were D.Will, Roy, and Cupid. Cohort II were members of the freshman class that began to be subjected to challenging curriculum with their enrollment in Honors English and Honors History courses. Moreover, in order to master the standardized curriculum in rigorous honors courses, D.Will, Roy, and Cupid were pedagogically supported utilizing the Guskey's Cycle (Guskey, 1997, 2003). As a result Cohort II were placed in the Advanced Placement Biology course their junior year in high school.

MarsB

MarsB was part of Cohort I. He graduated in 2005. He is presently attending (2011) Revert State University and majoring in Pre-Med and Chemistry. Prior to enrolling in college, he enlisted in the military – Air Force. He is single and has two children from two different women. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Academic and Racial Descriptors

My name is MarsB. When filling out an application, I place myself in regards to race as African American. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1-35)

I took AP Bio in 12th grade. I can't remember what I took in 11th grade. I know I took Human Biology. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 37-42)

Prior Perception to Enrolling in the Advanced Placement Biology Class

I did not hear anything previously before enrolling in the AP Bio class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 70-80)

Who Influences and Challenges Me to Take Advanced Placement Biology Class?

Actually, I don't know how I ended up with AP Bio. Ms. Kayap asked me to be in the class. I guess she thought I was smart enough. (Original Transcript Number Lines 44-68)

Ms. Kayap recommended me after the second week of school. Therefore, I didn't start with everybody else. I was not in Ms. Kayap's Earth Systems class; I remember her Bio-Chem class [from] 10th grade.

I don't even know what class I was taking before being enrolled in AP Biology class. I remember I was in Ms. Kook's astronomy course. Ms. Kayap said to Ms. Halasa, "You should really have MarsB, because he is the kind of kid who does really well on tests, but doesn't do his everyday daily work. He just gets bored. He doesn't do it." Then you both came to me and said, "Hey MarsB, do you want to take this class?" And I replied, "Well, why should I take it?" And Ms. Halasa said, "Because it's a college-level class and we'll see if you can make it in college by taking this. And you're smart." Then I decided to do it, and I

remember trying to get caught up because of the notes and stuff ahead of time. There was an assembly but I skipped it trying to get all the vocabulary done.

It was the beginning of the year [and] I actually needed the Science credit for that class. I was in a Science class before but I needed full science credit. (Original Transcript Number Lines 335-378)

It did benefit me from taking AP Biology class. Pretty much glad that my teachers forced me to take the class! They forced my hands and said “Take this class, or die! [Laughter]”(Original Transcript Number Lines 1188-1203)

Perceptions of Pedagogy

I remember this AP Bio book? Man, notes, notes and notes and notes. Is this, in particular, my book? Right? Wow, I remember how thick it was. There were these little plastic, like. . .oh [Laughter] . . . like layouts. Oh, they right here. Yeah. I liked how it’s layered. You can just peel back everything. Pretty sure you know. . .

In the Biology class, it wasn’t anything really different from Human Biology because it was more a bunch of other stuff from Biology. It wasn’t just Human Biology. It was like a collection of all biology stuff that I guess I needed to know in my whole life, whatever. I don’t believe that statement. Not at all!

Class was good. The genetics part is the one of the things that I actually, I talk about all the time . . . in my day-to-day conversations with my friends. We talk about our kids and what they look like, and what comes from where--stuff like that. Genetics actually mean reproduction.

I remember the course syllabus. This is what we got at the beginning of the class to let us know what we were going to be doing throughout the whole course. . . . You knew what you were going to be doing that day. You could go ahead and do it or wait until it was due to do it. Except for our labs, [that] were done in class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 82-153)

The labs summary is [really] like dummy proofs. . . . Can I say dummy? All summaries must be in pencil, blue or black ink. Probably the females would use something like pink or blue, or some crazy stuff like that. Baby blue. I don’t remember losing points for using different colored ink.

I can’t remember [independent studies] but I do remember doing the packets, . . . but I don’t remember which chapters they were. I remember when we [went] through [and] fill[ed] out our notes for homework. Then Ms. Halasa would come to class the next day or a couple of days later [and] check them, first of all to see if we did them. Then we’d go over them on the overhead [projector]. (Original Transcript Number Lines 164-208)

The daily structure was pretty much the same every day. We would come in, go over whatever homework we had, and we would get into what we were

doing for the day. If we had independent study from the day before, then we would come in and go over our independent study. Then we would go into a lab or go into our book work, whichever it was. Or we would do a test or a quiz. (Original Transcript Number Lines 469-480)

Perceptions of Labs and Skits

Actually, I don't really remember doing the labs. Didn't we do a slide lab, where we had to put together a slide? That's actually the only lab that I remember. (Original Transcript Number Lines 155-162)

We didn't do dissection. (Original Transcript Number Lines 482-502)

Perceptions of Ms. Halasa and Other Teacher(s)

How do you know if a teacher can teach you? [F]irst of all, you have to want to learn whatever they're trying to teach you. They said it so many times in school: "You are going to learn if you wanna learn. We can't teach you if you don't want to be taught." First and foremost you have to want to learn before you go into that class. If you're not interested, you are not going to pay attention no matter who the teacher is.

How can they teach you? How do you know? I mean teaching is pretty much just taking what you know and passing it on to somebody else.

I have learned something from every class I have taken in high school from every single teacher. Every teacher doesn't teach the same. Like, in Geometry class, I had two different Geometry teachers. I had Ms. Uster and Mr. Rannan. She taught differently from the way that he taught it. I picked up on it more in the way he taught it than the way she taught it. It was the same subject matter, right. I think it was more, because he did it more in plain English. Instead of throwing the Math terms at us and expecting us to know what it meant. My AP Biology instructor was funny. She was very animated--animated! She made it seem like it was something interesting. She made it seem like she wanted to teach it to us and this is so exciting, you have to know this. You don't have to, but it's some stuff you should know.

Even though she was never prepared for class and she wasn't organized, it did not bother me. It was funny. Most teachers, when you go into their class, they're all like, "I'm the teacher." She made it seem like she was a real person. I was like, "I'm not organized, but neither is she" so, ...

[S]he was not organized, but she made you keep these really precise [thick] notebooks. As long as she had my stuff, I was straight. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 632-710)

Perception About Others Toward Him Being in the Class

[For a long time,] I remember dropping the ball by not being in Honors. There might have been a couple of people in the class [who I felt] thought that I did not belong [there] because I was not [o]n an honors track. They were . . . the kind of people who have their noses in the air because they were in the 4.0 Club or National Junior Honors Society, or other stuff. I think it is cool but nobody else really cares about that stuff.

You can personally care but I don't care, really. We experienced that a lot in high school with the different cliques. [E]ven if they did not realize it, the smart people have cliques [too]. You know, people with 4.0's, 3.2's and 3.5's, they're all like: "Oh, we're smart." Nobody cares. I think those are the people who felt like, "Well, why are you in this class?" They knew me, they knew who I was and they knew what I did. I was a clown in school. I am not going to lie. I didn't take high school seriously. I still don't take it seriously. It's high school. After I get out of high school, you can have the worst grades in the world and still get into college. I'm not saying that you shouldn't apply yourself in high school, because you should. [I]t's a stepping stone. A friend in my class had a lot of scholarships.

I did feel that other people in the class may have thought, "Why are you in the class?" Yeah. [Laughter] I actually asked Troy, "What are you doing here?" [Laughter] He replied, "What are you doing here?" and I replied, "I don't know!" [Laughter]

I'm not sure Troy benefited from being in a class like [that], I can't say for sure. We talk. We still talk. We play videogames together and junk like that. Just like little kids. I don't know how it would of helped him. He's going into Forensics. Science really does not have anything to do with Forensics. I'm not going to say that because you can put a scientific formula into anything. You can take anything and put it together. I don't know and it may have benefited him. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1126-1186)

[After checking with MarsB he thought Forensics was Speech and Debate and did not make the connection to criminal law. After further discussion, he realized there is more than one meaning to words. He did not question the meaning at that time until we sat down to read the narrative for accuracy.]

Man, that ticked me off when someone would say: "What are you doing in here?" What do you mean, what are you doing in here? What are YOU doing in here? They didn't have to ask it . . . [b]ut you could tell. They were like, "You're in here?" YEAH, I'm in here. So?

As far as I can think, it was only me and Troy [who] were the only ones not in an honors track to begin with. I cannot recall anyone else. I felt most of

those people were on that honors track to begin with from Jump Street. Straight A's, straight B's whatever. So they were already like, "Oh, I'm in Honors. Like, I've been taking Honors courses since the sixth grade." I don't care.

I know I got a B in the class and it was actually a value of an A. There were people in there that had honors classes all the way through school. They barely making it and were getting stuck. Ah-hah! How does that feel? How do you like those apples? Cause I got a B and I didn't keep track. [Laughter] I don't feel like I did anything. It didn't really feel like any work to me. As far as I think, school is easy. Of course, in hind sight it is 20/20, right? (Original Transcript Number Lines 1205-1248)

Perception of May Advanced Placement Test

The AP Exam was . . . a long test. I really don't remember too much about it. I do not remember my score. It was just another test. (Original Transcript Number Lines 504-521)

Cheating Ring – “Comments on Integrity”

I recall . . . a situation that occurred. I don't even know what test it was but two students were caught cheating on a test. One of those students had like a 4.0 and 18 scholarships. I don't know if it was 18, but she had a lot of scholarships.

They were caught cheating. We all just happened to be sitting in the same area. Troy and I were interviewed [by] Ms. Halasa. My guess [was] that she thought we were somehow caught up in that because we sat in front of the other two. They were caught cheating and she asked us if we knew anything about it. I didn't know they were cheating. I was shocked and angry that Halasa thought I was cheating because I think she asked us because we were Black. [Laughter] I know he might have copied her homework once or twice, but I really don't remember seeing them cheating. Everybody was just working and trying to use their notes.

I don't know if anybody told or not. I always assumed it was because of proximity. We were all sitting there and . . . [w]e were all associated with each other, I mean even in class. We would sit and talk with each other and laugh. You know I can see where Ms. Halasa would get that idea [but] I didn't need to cheat. [F]rom what I understand of the situation, the guy student was cheating off the female student. Why do I think they cheated?

The class was not really difficult. I might understand if he felt, "Why am I even in this class?" or "I don't even know this stuff because I don't pay attention." I know for a fact that he didn't pay attention because I sat next to him for a little while. I don't know, maybe he just felt like, "This is my friend. She's

gonna let me cheat. So, Why Not?” He knew that she knew the answers because she studied and she was smart.

As the result, they got kicked out of the class. I think they got Incompletes. She lost her scholarships, at least a few of them. AP Biology is a college level course. The teacher called us in individually and questioned us about the situation. I was shocked and appalled because I had nothing to do with it. I had a good grade in class anyway, so there was no need for me to cheat. I just told her what I knew. No, I didn’t know they were cheating. Troy and I weren’t cheating . . . [T]hat would be stupid.

I remember the teacher asking everybody where they wanted to go to college, and then she came back with all the cheating policies from all those colleges. I thought, “Man, she wasn’t talking to me.” That is fair. College is serious, whether you’re going for sports, or you’re going to do something else.

[M[y favorite basketball player is Derrick Rose. I don’t know if you heard about that. He went to Memphis and they went to the championship his final year of college. I think it was his only year of college that he went and he played. They went to the championship and lost to Kansas. Memphis lost to Kansas! They had a record of 38 wins that season. They found out that he got into college because allegedly somebody else went in and took his SAT or his ACT. They stripped the school of all basketball records for the year and all the records he broke. They stripped them of the final four that they had won to get to the championship. So, it was really serious and he was in college.

Ms. Halasa asked, “How do you feel about cheating?”

MarsB replied, “You can’t cheat your way through life. [Laughter] “Like I said, it’s always going to come back on you, and you might lose something that’s very important to you.” (Original Transcript Number Lines 817-965)

Comments on the Link Between Science Grades and Effort

Oh, wow. I don’t even want to. These are my . . . oh . . . these are ALL my grades. (Original Transcript Number Lines 210-226)

Where are all my Science classes? I thought that I was good in Science, but I don’t see I don’t remember why they said I was good in Science? (Original Transcript Number Lines 228-238)

[Looking over his grades] There’s a C in Human, how did I get a C in there? I think I was cheating. Earth Systems, I took Earth Systems. I got a D. Then I took Earth Systems again, I got a D. Here is the AP Bio, and I got two B’s. I got a C in Human Biology, but yet I got D’s in Earth Science, [that] was easy!

Oh yeah, I remember. MarsB doesn’t do his homework. I don’t like the daily things. Let’s be real. It was boring. But I would always ace the tests. I’m

a good test taker. Not to toot my own horn or anything. Wow, that is amazing. I don't even know how I got in the college with these grades.

I got a B in AP Biology and that is a college course. I recall how easy it was. All you had to do was your homework and study. It took me four years to learn that. (Original Transcript Number Lines 240-301)

Comments on Work Ethic

It was Senior Field Day. Everybody went to Field Day but me because I was doing AP Bio homework . . . I had to get caught up. I was not really mad for missing Senior Field Day. Actually, I missed graduation too, but I didn't care. I graduated.

I got suspended [and] wasn't there. I got kicked out of my Choir class with Ms. Ganer. We were in class, doing warm-ups. After warm-ups were over, we were supposed to be doing breathing exercises, and somebody said something to me and I told them to shut the F up. [S]he was like, "What did you say?" and I was like "He . . ." and she [said]: "I don't care, get out of my class." And I was like, "I don't care. What are you gonna do, suspend me? I'm about to graduate." [Laughter] That's exactly what happened. I got suspended and did not walk the stage [during graduation]. I came, picked up my diploma [and said]: "I don't care, I'm leaving."

"I don't care," about the world because it did not affect [me]. I did graduate. I got my diploma.

I have that kind of attitude, I feel, "Well, I'm gonna get through it. It's gonna work out." It might not work out the way everybody and I want it to. I really don't even know. That's just the kind of person that I am.

I don't know if that's how my family is. There are a lot of people [who] stress over the day-to-day stuff. "Oh, I don't have any money. I don't have this, I don't have that. I can't do this, I can't do that." I don't care. When I first went into the military, I wasn't the best troop. People were like, "Oh, I got paperwork. I'm gonna get in trouble." When I was in the office the people would say, "You don't even care, do you?" I would reply "I do care, but what can I do about it now?" (Original Transcript Number Lines 381-445)

I did what I did and there is nothing I can do about it. You're gonna give me the paperwork and I'm gonna do the same thing that I already did when I got up this morning. I'm gonna get up, I'm gonna shower, I'm gonna put my uniform on, and I'm gonna go to class or I'm gonna go to work.

Not all the time, do I take responsibility for my consequences. [Laughter] Sometimes I say to myself, "Man, that wasn't my fault." I will act that way because there was nothing I could do about this. There are a lot of situations where you can say, "There's nothing I can do about it." If I get in trouble for something, I will tell myself "Well, alright. I did it. There's nothing I can do about it. So, just press on." There are other situations where I had a girlfriend and I cheated on her. She would be mad and I would say, "What are you mad

for? There's nothing we can do about it now." I didn't mean to put myself in that situation but it happens. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 449-467)

It is a little stumbling block. As I said earlier, you have obstacles. It's just up to you to hurdle them. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1019-1020)

I am thinking of studying Pre-Pharmacy, Biology, Chemistry or whatever I am excited about. The hurdle is getting out of bed and going to class knowing that I don't have to because nobody is going to make me go to class. I do not like to schedule classes before noon because I am not a morning person and I need to catch the bus. You have to make yourself and know that there's a big reward at the end for. The world doesn't owe you anything. But getting that degree will definitely open up doors. It doesn't guarantee you happiness; it doesn't guarantee you a job. It just guarantees you opportunities, which is a lot more than say for someone else who doesn't have one. Those opportunities that you get after you get your degree are more than what you had before you started. When you start, you have a bunch of debt and a bunch of classes to go to. [Laughter] When you're done, then it's like "Man, I'm a doctor," or, "I'm a pharmacist," or I'm a whatever. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1041-1071)

I'm getting old and I want to finish what I'm starting. Something I feel like I have a real problem with, finishing what I start. If I can sit in the Air Force for four years and take all the stuff that I've been through there, then college is going to be a breeze. I need to just stick it out. I need to feel that I've actually done something at the end of the day. Actually just yesterday at I told a girl that, "The best advice I can give you is do what you want to do. Do something you like no matter what anybody else tells you. They may think it's stupid or they think you can't make anything out of it. Only you can determine that."

You know what you want to do with your degree. You know what you want to do with your trade, or whatever. Somebody else might say, "Oh, that's dumb, why are you doing that?" But it doesn't matter because you're the one who's doing that. At the day, you have to live with that. You have to like what you're doing. If you don't want to roll out of bed and you tell yourself "I hate my job. I hate my life. I hate my wife." Man, you don't want to do that instead you have to do stuff that you like to do whether it makes a lot of money or not. My friend and I were having a discussion the other day about politics, which I don't like to discuss because I think politics are retarded. [Laughter]

This is my friend who likes Politics. He's really into Politics. We were talking about socialized medicine and I was like I don't think that's a good idea. He replied, "Why not? Don't you think people deserve to get treated for free? I mean it is healthcare." I told him, "Don't you think I should get paid for doing what I do? I'm in there saving people lives. I'm in there finding cures for disease. I'm in there doing stuff to help these people. The least you could do is pay me." I would do it for free. Honestly, I'd become a missionary and be a doctor missionary in Honduras or somewhere.

There's a lot of things out there, plus with my Air Force background. I'd do that for free. You know what I'm saying? But, at the end of the day, I need to pay my bills. I think I deserve customer service for free. Where is the customer service? Why do you get paid for what you do? You call me and harass me and tell me to pay my bills. If I'm not getting paid at my job, I can't pay you for these bills. How did this start?

Oh yeah, we were talking about socialized medicine. He replied, "Well, medicine and stuff costs too much." I told him it was because it takes years and years of research, and these people aren't doing this research for free. These scientists aren't doing this for free. They've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars going to school so they can research these medicines and these cures for these diseases. He replied, "Well, they haven't cured anything and they probably made it in the first place." You're right and they probably did make it. I mean you can make anything but you need to be able to get rid of it. Somebody has to do it and that somebody wants to be paid. If you are going to be giving away medicine and stuff for free, people aren't going to be getting paid. They're not going to be doing it for nothing.

I don't even have to remind myself because I love what I do and what I'm going to be doing because I want to do it. I'm not going to college because somebody made me go to college. I'm not going into medicine because my dad's a doctor or my mom's a nurse and they told me that you need to do this, blah, blah, blah, you gotta go to Harvard or Yale, blah. I'm not doing it because they want me to. Instead, I think of this saying, "Is the juice worth the squeeze?" – that is what my political buddy would say. (Original Transcript Number 1321-1396)

Study

The everyday stuff just was like, monotonous. It was just do this out of the book and do this, and do that, and...boring. I didn't see a purpose. As far how I study, I do this by listening in class. They are not going to take the majority of your homework instead of your class work put it on the tests. Because you have students, like myself, who don't do the homework, but pay attention in class, and it's easy. If you're going over homework in class, there was no point in doing it in the first place. I'm just going to get the answers I was supposed to have on the homework in the class the next day.

Depending on what it is. Math, I have to take that all, I have to write it, I have to look at it, and have someone there to be explaining it to me, cause Math is kinda hard. You got numbers and letters, and if you don't know what the letters mean then it is difficult. Science is subject that you can see and touch and feel mostly everything that you talk about. (Original Transcript Number Lines 301-333)

However, in college you have to study more outside of class because it is on you to understand and process the information. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Student's Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

[H]ow do I know when I [have] really learned something? I don't know, [be]cause it sticks.

I'll remember it for years to come. History class--I really don't remember jack about History. So, I don't feel like I really learned anything. Well, that's probably because I didn't really think it was relevant.

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: ...learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

I actually kind of agree with that last one [Betty Gardner] because it puts the learning on the person. It is not like a certain formula. The other ones seem like learning is this, this, this and this, period. [The last] one it's more specific and more attuned for the person. You're only going to learn what you want to

learn or if you can apply what you're learning to something. You have to be able to relate it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 588-630)

Inquiry-based Science

I was actually interested in Science before I took the course because, like I said before, it's like stuff that you can touch and feel and see, and that's the kind of stuff that I'm into. Literature and all that stuff is cool but as far as imagination goes there is a lot imagination involved in Science. You can do different stuff with it. Nothing's ever really definite in Science because something new is always coming along.

That is what actually kind of got me into medical stuff and makes me want to become a doctor. I am studying Pre-Med Chemistry. I actually chose Chemistry instead of Biology because I've had so much of Biology because I'm in the Air Force as medic. We had to take a Biology class because we had to know all the parts of the body anatomy and physiology. I can only take so much of that stuff. I figured Chemistry would be kind of fun and different.

I enjoy science. That's like one of the best subjects you'll have in school. Language Arts is boring. History is boring. Math is alright, but it's still pretty boring. I slept many days in those classes. Science was the only classes I stayed awake in. (Original Transcript Number Lines 523-553)

Math and Science that was really my thing! I didn't have good grades in Math, but as far as picking up and understanding what's going on I did. I'm not saying you can't know Math, you can't know Science without Math because you can. A lot of people think it's one in the same. They can go together, but they don't have to. I didn't have the best Math grades, but I understood it enough to pass. However, my Science grades, like Ms. Halasa said, they were crazy good. Science was really my thing.

I think it was in eighth grade. I think I got an A in class. I think it was a biology class or a bio-chemistry class. It was eighth grade and I just understood. This is easy stuff. It's not easy, but it's understandable because Science can be broken down to the atom. [Laughter] And, you can really break Science down and it easy to understand. You can take the hardest, most difficult thing and break it down and make it easy to understand. But breaking stuff down can also make it hard, too. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1276-1307)

Here is another thing that I feel Science plays a part in what would you classify as Social Science? It's like a Social Science . . . People Science. That's a good word for it. I use Science in everything. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1447-1465)

I know you go to school to become scientist but what do scientist do *per se*? (Original Transcript Number Lines 1806-1821)

I have no idea what scientists do! I know chemist works with fuels and stuff like that and biologist work in labs with disease. What do they do? Have no idea. I see all these buildings but what do they do. I see polymer research buildings. Is that where scientist work . . . is that where they do research like the polymer science labs? All scientists have one thing in common which is they all study . . . therefore they perform research . . . they are researchers. I thought they all worked in labs wearing lab coats and cooking up something. I had no idea what they do. You know when you see them on TV, the scientist are in labs cooking up diseases such as *Outbreak* and *Jurassic Park*. My context of scientists comes from the movies I have seen. I have not met a scientist. Wait! I have met scientists in the Air Force. The chemist I know is a White woman who is fuel developer. She is the first one. I have never seen Black scientist. I have seen Black doctors but few. I have seen Black woman as nurses. Unless you consider drug dealer a chemist. Movies are what made me want to be scientist. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Accessing a College Education

Not all of my family all went to college. I don't know what mom got her degree in. I think she might of . . . got her degree in Sociology.

[O]ther people influence[d] me into going into medicine. My teachers Ms. Kayap and Ms. Halasa. "Oh my God, you are so good in Science. Why don't you go to school to become a doctor or something like that," [they told me]. I replied, "Why? Why would I do that?" And the more I thought about it is actually interesting. It's something that I could see myself doing and get fat paychecks that I earn.

There's a lot of responsibility. Obviously, working as a paramedic, I can see . . . and experience many different things in real learning environment. I've sat in on several surgeries. I've worked in an emergency room. I've worked in an inpatient ward. I worked in outpatient clinics. The surgery, I was just sitting in, I was not actually the surgery tech. I just scrubbed in, watched, took notes, chilled out and watched.

I am already enrolled in Revert State [University] but I had some financial issues, so I didn't get to take any of my classes yet. It just a little stumbling block as I said earlier, you have obstacles. It's just up to you to hurdle them.

Right now I am studying Pre-Med Chemistry, but I'm thinking about switching to Pharmacy. Oh, it's just the same as Pre-Med degree. (Original Transcript Number Lines 967-1065)

I am excited about college starting. I have all these dreams and goals for college. It is pipe dream to me and I know I can do it. I am the kind person that knows stuff takes a lot of work. I am more than willing to do the work. Before I start doing the work, I will get started on the work I shouldn't do this. I am taking

my freshman class my pre-req. When graduate I want to be valedictorian and get all the crazy awards and honor society. I know I can! (Original Transcript Number Lines 1661-1699)

In order to get in med school graduate with flying colors, I still need to take the MCATS. I was thinking about how to prepare I have to take Microbiology and Organic Chemistry. I heard O'Chem was the hardest class I will ever take. I am sure I will get tutors. They are on campus all over the place.

I am scared of whole science stuff. I know and I can get it but as I said before Ms. Halasa did break things down into easier then harder. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1751-1795)

We did not discuss this before but I really want to be theater major. I enjoy the arts but I think medicine would be more practical for me.

After finishing two science courses in college, I did not think the A.P. Biology class was as strenuous as these college courses. I do not want to make A.P. Biology harder for futures students but if the class is college preparation course then it needed to be as close to college as you can get. In college, you have to be there and if you miss class you miss the notes then you are screwed. You cannot go to the teacher and ask for the notes.

However, in high school if you missed a class the notes in A.P. Biology class were fill-in the blanks. Therefore, if you missed class for week because I was sick then I can always fill it out because it was in the book. However, in college the power points which are posted online are more of outline and if you miss class then you do not know what the professor said in class. Everything will not be given to you and you have to be in class in college,

I am in class 3 hours a week for lecture. I scheduled my own classes but I did not schedule lab class that was separated and not connected grade but I did not realize I needed to have it.

I wish the A.P. Biology class mimic more of the college course in terms of lecture notes not necessarily the pace of the class because not all the teachers in college teach that fast pace. But, the two science classes I did taken were like boom boom boom! I felt the independent study in A.P. Biology was more like what we do in college now. I felt Ms. Halasa should have let us drown a little a bit. I think I can say this because she is not teaching anymore [Laughter].

I scheduled my own classes but did not schedule lab class that was separated and not connected grade. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Comments About Race, Ethnicity and Gender

The prompt:

Historically being an African-American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

Historically, being an African American male has been a source of limitations in the U.S. I think that's a bunch of ----- that is crutch! An excuse that people use for not doing what they need to do and want to do. They are "Oh, well, I can't do this because I'm Black. I can't," you know. I feel that is negatively. I rather be around positive people.

All the time I have conversations with people. After we graduated and people started going out into the world talking about pursuing their dreams, and doing what they wanted to do, and this, that and the other.

I try not to talk to them about it. I think "If that is really how you feel, then I'm not going to judge you based on that. If that's how you feel..." It doesn't necessarily make it the truth because everybody is presented with different opportunities. You know whether you realize it or not you might realize that you're presented with an opportunity after the opportunity is past. In high school, I had friends who were good in sports, who were good in school, who were good at writing and music. All of my friends are good at different things. They can take that and run with it, but they choose not to. "Well, I'm Black, and you know, that presents an obstacle for me." There are obstacles in life. I know females out there who have kids and they're in school, and they don't have a boyfriend, they don't have a husband, and they're living with their parents. They are still going to school. I think it would be harder for a female than a Black male despite, whether you are a White female or a Black female. "Oh, you're a girl, you can't do this, or you can't do that." So, you know what I'm saying?

The Air Force! I look past it (issues: race, gender, political affiliations). I'm saying even if it had, I probably wouldn't have even noticed it. I probably would have thought they just had it in for me because I'm me. (Original Transcript Number Lines 712-779)

Friends

All my friends graduated. I hang out with a lot of intelligent people. They are intelligent people in different ways. We all made it out of high school but college isn't for everybody. I'm not going to base how smart somebody is on whether they went to college or not. (Original Transcript Number Lines 796-815)

All you have to do is go in there, sit, listen, and pay attention to what's going on. Right? Being in the environment of the class, what's going on in the curriculum might not even matter to you! Learning is part of your environment and you take in your environment. You could have a good group of people in your class. Or you could be completely boring and sucking in class. If you have a good group of people in there who like actually like to make stuff fun, ask questions, because they're not afraid of, "Oh, somebody will think I'm dumb if I ask that."

I surrounded myself with more people who were on a track of different kinds of intelligence. They were smart in different kinds of ways and they all

graduated. Yes, I did get influenced by them. Because out of all my friends, I had the worst grades and I had the hardest time in high school. I feel glad as far as school stuff goes because Science and Math were my strong subjects. That's what, I'm just like, that's my stuff. All my friends were good at different stuff. My one friend was good at Language Arts. I would say, "Man, I hate that class. That's so boring." There was some stuff that I could get into but not really. My other friend he was good at Economics, Politics and History. My other friend he was good at sports. He got pretty decent grades. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1252-1272)

Alright, I've learned about independence and depending on myself because I was doing stuff for myself. Stuff like that. It's crazy. No, it's crazy. Because my friends and I sit around and we all got kids. Your kid's turning what, WHAT?? Mine's turning four, really? Some of their kids are in Kindergarten already. We're old. Our kids are older and getting old. I remember when she was a baby. So, it's kind of weird. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1532-1562)

Family

I am not the first to go to college in my family. My mom and several of her brothers did go. My aunt works for the state of Ohio. She went to college. Another one of my aunts is still in college. My uncle went to college.

Of my siblings, I'm the oldest. I have one younger brother and two younger sisters. My younger brother just graduated from high school. He is going to Central State. So, he says so but, I don't know. As far as I know, he's going to Central State. (Original Transcript Number Lines 555-586)

I have a daughter and she is four years old. Being a father is cool sometimes. Being a parent is hard, but not as hard as people make it seem. That's another thing that I feel that people use as a crutch and an excuse for not giving their hundred percent. You can do whatever you want to do. You just have to overcome your obstacles. You have to want to do stuff. (Original Transcript Number Lines 781-794)

No one in my family is in medicine. Just me! I tried to get my brother into the whole Science thing but he said, "I hate you. I hate Science." He wants to study . . . what is it called? Business Management or Business Administration and I might want him to be in my office to control my business components. But that would be after a couple of years and I move into a private practice.

I feel my family always knew that I was smart. Up until high school, I was on the honor roll, merit roll and I had good grades and stuff. In high school, I just fell out because I'm tired. I was kind of burnt out. My whole family said, "Man, we know you're smart." I've heard that my whole life, "You're smart. You got to apply yourself." I feel that I needed to meet everybody's expectations.

I don't have to but I made them proud of me. They'll be proud of me regardless of what I do but I don't feel I should let them down. I'm actually not the oldest of the grandkids on either side. I'm actually the second oldest of the grandkids on both sides of my family as far as grandchildren goes.

The ones ahead of me kind dropped the ball a little bit. It is important for me to be a role model for the rest of the younger ones. Because this one's f'ing up and so is this one. I'm trying to show them they don't have to. I said to my brother, he's only three years younger than me, that he has his mind to go as far as he's wants to do or whatever he feels like doing in life. But, I know my younger sister; she's 17, she looks up to me. I see it all the time. She loves her brother. I feel like I need to set an example for her. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1073-1124)

My parents didn't go to my school conferences and I'm glad they didn't. They were involved to some point. I guess they kind of realized we can go to the school for every conference, for every PTA meeting, every whatever, but at the end of the day, we can't go to school with you and make you do your work.

This is how I became the person that I am. I'm going to be me, regardless. My mom says that to me all the time. "I can't make you do anything on your own. You're going to do what you want to do." I always reply to her, "You're right. I AM going to do what I wanna do." I tell people that all the time. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1497-1530)

My daughter doesn't live with me she lives with her mom. Her mom went to Tuebay High. I wouldn't say she is nice. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1601-1610)

I am an apartment person but I am still with my mom right now. I am moving out ASAP because I just like my own space. I have always lived with my mom in until I went to the Air Force. My dad and I are cool but I always lived with my mom. My dad and I are real good. I act like my mom and I think that is why her and I do not get along. We are more alike then she would admit and that is why I am so loud. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1635-1659)

My mom says that I should be reading to my daughter all the time. She got mad because I let her watch Family Guy. She knows words. One day we were at my cousin's daughter's b-day party, my Ex came to pick us up and my daughter [four years old] started to cry saying she wanted to stay. I said, "You are starting to irritate me." She said, "Since I am irritating you, then take me home." I felt really bad and I kinda was amazed how she knew what that meant. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1703-1713)

When reading this I want to correct all grammar. After reading this, I forgot how enthusiastic I was to going to college. Some days I do not feel the same way. I am like what the FUCK I am going to college. I do not even want to be here I question what I am doing at times. I know that people who are doing

what they want to do still question it but “Is the juice worth the squeeze?” – that is what my political buddy would say, George. We would say this about people selling drugs on street is not worth the time. You are not getting half what you put out to get. Drug dealer may have really good day and bring out a lot of money or have a real bad day and bring in nothing. You have to be on the streets all times of night and people are constantly calling on you on your phone. It is a lot more work. Instead if you worked a regular 9-5 job then you know your pay check and you know what you are getting paid every two weeks. Juice you are getting is not worth all the squeezing you are doing. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Zack

Zack was part of Cohort I. He graduated in 2005 and is presently (2011) working in industry as back-up supervisor who trains newly hired employees. He has not attended college at this point. He is single with no children. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Academic and Racial Descriptors

My name is Zack and I identify myself as an African American male. I graduated in spring of 2005. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1-12)

The classes I took my senior and junior years were A.P. Biology [and] Chemistry [paused] I think it was those two. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 12-17)

Prior Perception to Enrolling in the Advanced Placement Biology Class

Prior to enrolling in the A.P. Biology course, I did not really hear much about the class. I had heard Advance Placement classes [were] more difficult. I just wanted to take it just for the simple fact that I guess I could. I always wanted to take the easy way out in past. I just didn’t see the point of making it more difficult for myself. I was graduating along with others. Exactly! What’s the point of taking challenging classes? [Laughter] I can still graduate. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 46-71)

Who Influences and Challenges to Take Advanced Placement Biology Class?

I was influenced to take the A.P. Biology and Chemistry courses by Ms. Halasa, and Mr. Jones (respectively). I don't know what else influenced me. Ms. Halasa challenged me. She [had] seen me in the office; I might have been in trouble for something. I can't remember . . . She said I couldn't pass her class even if tried so I had to take it. O, yeah—[it was] prom night. I didn't have a ride home and Ms. Halasa drove me home and. . . I recall her challenging me. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 19-44)

Perceptions of Pedagogy

[L]ooking at the A.P. Biology book, I recall terms and definitions. Some of the terms jump out at me. Um, it wasn't this book I remembered so well. It was the folder. I know you remember that folder. Yes, it was the binder. It was a lot of work for each chapter however, it wasn't organized enough, just put it like that. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 73-95)

I remember when we covered DNA, hereditary and maybe evolution. I remember that. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 137-139)

[L]ooking at the course syllabus, it reminds me of the same things about the notebook. I never took the time to read syllabus. Every so often we had a new [notebook] and then at the end of the course we had to turn the whole thing in. [Laughter] I probably had four pages out of the whole thing done.

You remember Lola? We were scrambling to try to get [the notebook] turned in. If we don't turn [the notebook] in, we were not able to graduate. That was crazy. I wasn't expecting that. I didn't expect half of them to turn in until the end of the semester. I didn't expect that. It would have been nice to know. I had been caught slipping due to fact it was my senior year.

The independent studies were done with the chapters outside of the class time and without Ms. Halasa reviewing them in class. . . . I remember the take home tests. . . . I guess they were helpful in their own way. I thought if we would have had a test over what we had covered in class it would have been a lot more [productive] for me.

I remember the class being right after lunch. [A] double period would have been nice. We would have learned a lot more. It was a lot of information to cover. . . . Ms. Halasa should have stuck to the surface more closely and not given us any leeway. Being seniors . . . you'll have students that will be obedient and others [who] are not. I was in a lot of sports and other activities, it was hard. It really was. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 165-273)

Perceptions of Labs and Skits

I recall ecology and cell division and the skits about cell division. I remember cytokinesis . . . [pause] I knew mitosis and meiosis, RNA protein synthesis, gene regulation and genetic engineering. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 141-163)

[Laughing] I recall [the] outfits Ms. Halasa use to wear during the skit in order to play out or act out the cell parts. Ms. Halasa used to make us act out. [Laughter] We actually had to do it. When I said I'm not putting that on and you would have to kick me out of this class [Laughter] if I ever put it on. And then I put it on. [Laughter] It was fun and it was okay to be silly. Is it okay to be studious. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 326-358)

We did labs? We did labs??? I cannot remember labs. O yeah, we did labs. I remember the labs in Jones's class especially when he was flaming something and we were taking things apart. I think that we should do labs pertaining to that specific chapter in A.P. Biology. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 360-374)

Perceptions of Ms. Halasa and Other Teacher(s)

[Ms Halasa] wasn't organized. She was a pack rat. . . . Yeah, complete chaos! . . . Ms Halasa did know where everything was. However, she seemed too unorganized for my taste buds. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 95-123)

There was something new every day and that is what I liked with Ms. Halasa. It really wasn't the same, like lecturing or covers the same topics, it was always something different. That's one thing I did like about that class. I mean I never knew what to expect when I was in the class. She kept stuff fresh. Ms. Halasa would do stuff. I mean she would just stomp on it do it [Laughter] (Original Transcript Line Numbers 315-324)

Oh, a lot of our high school teachers were positive. Pretty much all of my teachers were pretty much a positive influence. Every teacher I had there were pretty much a positive influence. They always were but you could tell when someone really cared or just had too. . . . Their emotions were there. Just the way, I mean I can't better describe it, just the way that they say things. They would really make eye contact. . . . You can just feel they feel something. I can say that Ms. Halasa cared, I really can and it is not just because I'm sitting here with her. I mean you can tell there were a handful of teachers that really cared about our future. They really did. You can really tell. I don't know how to describe it. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 617-633)

Perception of Classmates

My class was a funny class, just because everybody was different. There were a lot of characters. You could just tell before [the bell] rang. Sometimes it was funny. But sometimes it was sad. Noremac was a perfect example of sad character. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1799-1828)

I did not feel that other people thought I didn't deserve to be in the class because I didn't do the honors track. If someone else felt that way then they shouldn't have. Even if I had heard about someone who was thinking like that, I probably would have been upset. It probably would have actually drove me to do even better but I didn't think along that line, especially like for academic purposes. I thought everyone there should be in class. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1856-1873)

Perception of May Advanced Placement Test

I recall the A.P. exam that I took in May in the library and it was over the whole entire course. Do you have my grade? Cause I don't want to say it easy if I didn't have good grade. [Laughter] I didn't feel it was that difficult. It was pretty much on everything Ms. Halasa went over that year. I had unlimited time, most of the terms I was familiar... with them. If the terms were not understood, I didn't feel out of place or anything. I can't remember. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 376-403)

Cheating Ring – “Comments on Integrity”

Well, I thought about three incidents which were the phone, the cheating, and the stealing. Noremac I hope he's grown up by now. Fannie really liked helping him out so much. I think it's sad. Just way she helped was too much. Fannie's one of those people that were just spoiled. Noremac wasn't confident in himself. That was the saddest part. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1903-1927)

I recall Ms. Halasa called them in and showed them that they were cheating. Wow. Ms. Halasa stood real firmly on kicking them both out of class and gave them both F5's. Um-hum. That happened in my class. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1701-1797)

[T]he one reason I can never cheat is cheaters never amount to anything [b]ecause they don't think . . . and it's never gonna work. . . . [R]emember that everyone struggles. I mean the next person can be just as wrong, . . . you're better off thinking for yourself. I forgot that Ms. Halasa asked everyone what school each and every one of us was planning on attending in the near future. Our

principal called each of the schools [Universities and colleges that the students were planning to attend in the next fall] including the Air Force and asked what their policy for cheating at their institute. The point was that if you cheat, you know these are the things that will happen in the real world.

Sport store is another incident [including] Henry, Jim and Noremac. I guess they wanted visors and being that they didn't have the financial they had Noremac just take it for them. Being gullible boy as he was he went into the store and tried to do it. However, when he was questioned about the situation he ratted them off. Every single one of them! He was trying to fit in. I wasn't there. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1830-1854)

Comments on the Link Between Science Grades and Effort

Looking over my transcripts, my grades in A.P. Biology was first semester a C and second semester a D. My grades in Chemistry the year before were a C and a C. When I was in grade Biochemical Systems it was a C and B. My freshman Physical Science grades were a C and D.

[L]ooking back, I [feel] the grade reflected my effort. After looking at my grades, especially A.P. Biology, oh I really enjoyed the class a lot. . . . You know if I could take it over I would. I'd probably get a better grade. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 275-313)

Comments on Work Ethic

The job I have presently involves skin and hygiene solutions. In the past, I worked at previous places such as a plastics company and polymer company.

I'm the kind of person [who] will not just settle for something, I'm not gonna settle for less. If I know that I'm not making the kind of money I should be, then I won't stay. Or if I know they're not treating me with the proper respect or the way I should . . . be treated then I'm out. If I feel they are working me too hard I will leave also. The plastic company was a relatively easy job. I worked twelve hours a day, but I felt I had a lot of duties and I didn't feel I was compensated enough for them. [The polymer company and toy company [were] hard work each morning . . .

Toy company was a sweat shop. I made a decent amount of money there. I probably made about 15 bucks an hour. It was decent enough, but I literally go there with nothing on but a tank top in the middle of wintertime and just come out doors open with sweat. . . . I mean if you did something wrong despite you being there for 10 years they would just walk you out. It was crazy.

The place I work now is very rewarding. The work load isn't too difficult. They have . . . lot of different jobs. You can do anything you want to. You can work in the office if you wanted to, work in the warehouse . . . or you can drive a truck. In my job, I work particularly in shipping. I ship out various international

and United States orders. I see myself growing in the company. . . . I like it a lot and I love the way the employer takes care of their employees well being. They care a lot about their employees. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 778-832)

You see, success is happiness. I think if you're happy . . . you are successful. I don't think a lot of money makes you successful, . . . having a lot of friends, . . . or having a good job . . . makes you successful because you must be happy with yourself. [Although] sometimes having things you want makes you think you're success[ful]. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1006-1011)

Comments on the Effects of Disclosure

Next year. I believe everyone else will get settled in my family. I'm not sure but I would probably want to go university. I wouldn't want to go to JKelly University—not because it is not a good school but I just want to be different. I just want . . . to experience something new something different. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1121-1131)

Getting and Giving Advice

My advice to other students about school science would just tell them to be prepared for anything. . . . [B]ecause I never knew what was gonna happen, . . . I just . . . think . . . be prepared for anything. . . . I could have been more focused and enthusiastic. I can't say I didn't care how things were, I was thinking about things. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 489-506)

I would just always like to get ideas. . . . [S]ometimes I would be early and beat those around me. . . . I want to sit by smarter people. Whenever I have trouble I would ask. I would [go to] various people to get different ideas . . . I thought your class had a lot of characters? A lot of characters! (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1876-1904)

I am not afraid to be myself. A lot of people are so afraid to be themselves. I believe that. Being emotional, being able to care is emotionally healthy and allows you to care for people. I surrounded myself by good people. Like me, Tony, Lola, Rria, and Noremac. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1674-1696)

Lola and I did stuff together. Dave is another one I would ask if I had any questions. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1891-1908)

Student's Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

I know that I really learned something just from the fact that terms are jumping out. If we were having a conversation about biology, I don't know if I would remember exactly what mitosis was, but I would recall the term. I mean that's how I can know I learned something. Sometimes it's not the coach that teaches you, it's much more than that.

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: . . . learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

After reading these definitions, I would say learning probably has to do with what Betty Gardner said. She said that gaining a new understanding is when you learn something you learn, you get a language you want to learn the information you were trying to understand. She stated the more engaged students are in creating meaning, more determined they are.

The kind of work that I do right now, I am learning . . . a lot and I think whenever you do something different you have to learn. Whenever you go to a new job or do something new, obviously keep doing it and you are gonna learn to adapt to it. I know I've learned things because I was real bad before I worked

there. I know I didn't know those things prior to working there. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 737-781)

Inquiry-based Science and Moral Conundrum

I was always interested in science even before taking the A.P. Biology course. Science is more physical than anything because labs! All my science teachers, I mean all you guys are good teachers. Ms. Halasa, Mr. Jones, who was the other ones, Mrs. Witt. I know I missed somebody. O! yeah, Ms. Kapay. These entire guys were all good teachers. The thing about teaching, when you do the hands on things it helped us to learn a lot better. I think anybody will say that when you physically do something it helps your brain out remembering a lot more clearly.

Science is just stuffing it with information. You figure I have nine classes in a day and everything is different, that's a lot of information especially when you are immature. I definitely think science classes were easier for me in comparison to my other classes because of the hands on [approach].

Elementary was the first time I was interested in science. It started with my first lab and I liked it. [Laughter] I was dissecting a frog. I wasn't doing too well. [Laughter] But it was . . . no I wouldn't do it [Laughter] because it's hard to sit down and just take it apart and that's what I'm not do that. This is animal cruelty at the end. I'm not gonna take something apart.

I guess I do not want a surgeon to work on me for the first time especially if he never looked at cadavers. Come to think about, No! I want the surgeon who worked on a lot more other people. I don't want to be the first one. The first time they make a mistake, I want him to feel comfortable. However, I'll be asleep anyway. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Line Numbers 409-487)

Accessing a College Education

Down the list my 21-year-old brother is at MaryAnn [College] so I gave the loan to him. All summer he worked at skin and hygiene solutions. I got him a job at skin and hygiene solutions company so at he could make a little bit of spending money and buy what he needs. He can try to pay his student loan off at JKelly U right now.

He is at MaryAnn . . . [b]ut, he still owed money to JKelly U [University]. He had previously gone to a school out of state. He could not adapt over there, a Christian college. I don't know what exactly he did; he was put on academic probation. Eventually he couldn't play football and that is his passion to play so he went to a different school. He started out at JKelly U. I told him, "You could get a scholarship, I know you could." I said I wouldn't push him into doing it. He got it! He got a scholarship at MaryAnn, a full ride scholarship, which is good. The one thing I don't like about the schools is [that they are]far too

expensive. . . . Lot people do not understand that. . . . It's crazy. It's a lot of money. I can only imagine what happens when you have to pay them back and I don't want to be in that kind of predicament... (Original Transcript Line Numbers 918-953)

Oh, I think everyone should get their education and there is a lot we all don't know. . . . I don't think you can ever be educated enough.

If I were to go to the university, there would be so many things I'd like to study because I want to do so much. I'd like to try everything. I'd like business administration. I've always been good in art and art design. I like computers, computer engineering or computer design, anything in science. I would really go for everything. . . . I don't think there is anything I would not like to do. I would just need to decide. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1013-1031)

School to Employment Connection

It's a little weird that I am working in the field of science. I would consider it more science than anything [else]. I think there is a little bit of everything involved in this job. It is math, science, physical labor and more social skills like English.

There was a freshman connection class that I think they used to have that helped me. I would consider English did too. My personal job is that I am in charge of the temporaries. When someone comes in, I describe our warehouse to them; I tell them what our facilities are like; I give them a visual tour and then I put them to work. I have to make a decision whether they can stay in our department or if they [need to] find another job. Sometimes it hard, but somebody's got to do it. But you know that's what I handle. When I'm not doing that, I'm checking out orders, and loading the truck. The math skills you have to know involves how many skids are you shipping out for that order, what type of product it is, recognition skills and international [calculations]. . . The math skills [are] needed to calculate each trailer. . . . The English skills needed are just being able to talk to people. I've been around a lot of different types of people with different nationalities. Obviously, the science skills would probably have to do with the types of soap. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 840-869)

I have retirement plan at skin and hygiene solutions with a 401K and they match. I also have saved money in other ways for however I do not really understand the stock market and if somebody explained to me more then I would try it.

Presently, I am working at skin and hygiene solutions industry. I have been working ever since I have graduated from high school. My hours for working have always been from Sunday through Thursday from 10:30 p.m. until 6:30 a.m. My current schedule is usually Sunday through Friday night. If I'm

lucky, I get one day off. I usually work a 10 hour day from 10:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.

I have always worked the third graveyard shift because it gives me a lot more time to do other things. I don't sleep that much. I think I get enough sleep? I usually sleep maybe six or seven hours a day. I go straight home and go to sleep. I have a lot more of my day for myself. I would never work second shift because it takes up your whole day. I like to enjoy the day and I love the sunlight. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 703-731)

Comments About Race and Ethnicity

The prompt:

Historically being an African-American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

However, I have not experienced any of those kinds of things in my life personally. No, no, I don't think. . . . Ms. Halasa challenged [because of my] ethnic background. When she challenged me, . . . she was challenging me as a person and I was never challenged like that before. . . . I think African-American[s] in general have pretty much passed all our limitations, all of us have. I feel we have done a lot. I do not think we should not be challenged. There's no reason why they should try to challenge us. I believe we can do it. Therefore, I believe opportunities have already been given to everyone in one way or another. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1033-1051)

My mom is 44, she was the first African American woman to graduate from Falls High School. I think she was excited to accomplish graduation as well as being the first one but to graduate. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1435-1547)

Priorities and Parenting

I recall that when I was a senior in high school I thought more about girls and athletics than my grades. It is more about the social status . . . in the senior year. [Laughter] As a senior, it is everything about you, your friends, and your swag [way you do things and hold yourself].

A lot of my friends graduated. There was only a few that didn't graduate. Obviously when they didn't, they weren't focused enough and maybe they didn't have all their priorities straight. They didn't apply themselves basically. I think anybody can graduate high school.

A lot of people helped me focus. My friends and peers throughout my life, teachers, parents, sometimes it was just people. People in general. My

mother by keeping me out of trouble she would punish me, if I didn't have good grades. I would get in trouble . . . probably by not having a game, anything extra or no phone. I love my phone. She took that away. When she took my phone; I knew I was in big trouble. I didn't really watch TV that much. She would just take whenever I wanted to do something extra, go to the movies or take the car, anything. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 508-572)

Sports

Troy and I actually had study tables for the sports teams but not that often. If you had lower than 1.0 GPA then you were assigned to study table. Why did we not have the team always meet [for a] study table? I think we should of but I don't see why we did not? Being in a team was so important because you know it protects you from other situations. I think it that's a big plus, too. Maybe, if we got our whole team together for maybe like an hour then we would just concentrate on homework. Especially, because we had different age groups, the older players acted as a role model for the younger athletes. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1931-2052)

Henry and Jim both graduated and played sports with me. I don't keep up with any of those friends. I think Jim works at Rubbermaid, I think Henry works at Time Warner cable. . . . [W]henver I see them and we talk and everything. I asked them how there doing. What's new, but I don't like actually keep up with them.

I don't think Jim is the same role model I veiwed him in the past because he simply lost his passion; I don't think he has pride in himself. I don't know the story. I heard that he dropped out of school [Walsh] but I do not know for sure. Now, he might still be in school. People say things that sometimes are not really accurate.

Henry was at Toledo. I heard and know for a fact that Henry did not finish. I know that for a fact. Jim, he skipped. That's what somebody said. I don't know for sure. It's probably true. It's probably a 90% chance it's true. I don't even know why someone would make something up like that, but you never know. The reason I looked up to Jim was because I'd never seen someone was great about passing the football, he really was, and you could tell. He . . . loved to play football. He would do whatever it took to play football.

A lot of people talked about him. A lot of people they say he was jocking—you know what I'm saying—just a sports fanatic, no brains. I thought he was a lot more than that. He was really passionate about football, and if he gave that up, it had to hurt... [because] he really enjoyed it.

I think they both have children now but I don't know. I want to say two apiece... [T]hat's probably makes things harder. That'd be another reason why if he was halfway through school I mean why would you? Why would you quit

with a full ride scholarship. That's what I just don't understand. I would love to hear what their explanations is... (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1970-2027)

I think that Jim was truly strong. . . . I had never seen something like [him] before. I seen that dude hit some . . . people and his tackle paralyze[d] them. That is why I liked most about Jim. He was real; he was not scared of anything. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 2095-2098)

My coach is the best. I don't know how to describe him. [Laughter] Yes, it was Ralph O'Hare, of course. That dude, man he . . . [Laughter] I like him a lot. I like him a lot. I focus a lot. I can't say I don't like Tim (his twin brother) but I got to work with Ralph a lot more. Since, Tim did the sprints and he was the head coach. I ran long distance in high school and Ralph was my coach that worked with me.

My first year I ran track I got the most improved runner at the end of the season. Ralph really helped me out a lot. I never got hurt or even fell. Whenever I wasn't putting much effort into it as much as I needed to, he would be there for me. He really would be there. Now coaches, I can't say all my coaches were terrible. However, my basketball coach was terrible. He did the same drills and didn't care. He cared about a couple of the athletes on the team but he didn't care for everybody. You could see that.

Yes, sports were huge for me. Sports helped me develop team work skills and it helped me develop a sense of not being alone. I always had teammates around. Track, by far helped me out a lot. I think track helped me out the most. A lot of people think that track is an individual sport because there are so many events that stand out in track but it's not. Track is probably the most team dedicated sport there probably is. When I came up in track we probably had about 60 people. We had so many people! Each event ranges from 5 to maybe even 10 athletes in each event. A lot of people don't understand how points create your score. You face an opponent on the track, each person gets a point. If you come in first you get 5 points, if you come in second you get 3 points, and if you come if third you get 1 point. At the end of the event it all adds up. Therefore, it is really competitive. Sometimes I would be fighting just to come in third, just to get one point. Just to get us something on the board. Man it was really, I really liked track. I really did! (Original Transcript Line Numbers 631-680)

The reason I am interested in sports, is that my family has always been sports centered. My mom likes sports but she doesn't understand football or baseball. However, she knows a lot about track. I think everybody should play sports even if they are not good at it. In fact, I think people should never say never and it does not have to be a team sport per se. They can just work out by running on the tread mill. I work out at Lift Works and go boxing. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1568-1593)

Friends

Random peers were my role models. Sometimes they were positive people like sport athletes both in my school and outside the school. I think I looked up to Jim Landon. I can't say he was a role model but I looked up to him. He was a really strong athlete. I don't know if you remember Trent, Trent Role but I grew up around him and his older brother Andrew. Ryan Belt who was on track and basketball was someone I looked up to. Outside of school it was a mixed breed of role models. I am not sure who right now I think is a positive role model in the professional sports league. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 574-609)

People outside of my family, peers, teachers and just people in general that would help motivate me or help to keep me focused. I would say Noland. I had a few friends that were a little bit older than me and they give me a positive advice. They would just tell me to graduate and do things rights because you're not gonna get a second chance. They just tell me what not to do , whenever I was about to do something just because I thought it was right they would give me the answer. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 682-701)

Family

I might stay in skin and hygiene solutions a long [time] but it all depends. I have to make sure that everyone else is set first and my entire family members, in particular my brothers and also my little sisters. My four brothers and two sisters need to be financially wise. They don't need anything. They have everything that they need and just make sure they don't have to struggle. I am the oldest boy, oldest male. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 887-904)

Recently my older sister is divorced. I should say they were not married but they split up. She has a ten-month-old baby, no income, nowhere to go, so right now I'm helping her out. Now, I don't spoil people. I don't just hand out money but I do give out occasional loans. I had to give my brother like a \$2,000 loan so he could pay off JKelly U. He is working toward something positive. I'm not gonna aid like laziness. I'm not gonna to spoil them, not even my aunt.

I told my brother you would be in so much debt but you can always get a job as a teacher or something. I mean something, at least a job. I'm sure he'll be fine. Now my other brothers, my 18-year-old brother is at North High School right now. He should be able to get a full ride either at Louisville or Kansas probably for football. My 11-year-old brother is at the Hall of Fame School right now and is starting out at football. I already told mentioned that my 23-year-old sister earlier. My 9-year-old sister she goes to Buckey Elementary and she is starting out in track. She might be going to Inventor Hall Fame School. Hopefully she'll make it there.

Sports are very important to us as a family. Like I said before it teaches team work, to be independent because we always look at our whole family like a team. Everybody has to do their own part; everybody has their role or their position.

I can get my sister a job at skin and hygiene solutions industry but the one thing about her is she does not do physical labor. There's no harm in trying. There other departments that maybe she would be good for. You have to have some kind of college background to work in the front office. She is going to school right now but between full-time school, full-time work, and full-time childcare that is a lot to focus on. I would rather for her to either work or go to school because she has to make time for her child.

I know the neglect of a child is terrible. That is terrible. The problem I was talking about from my friends, family members. That's the latest. I think it's probably the fact that neglected children probably live by a more unsuccessful life.

[My goal is] going to college. [M]y 21-year-old brother and my sister finished college right now. My parents did not ever go to college.

My dad is fine however he has kidney failure. They think he had kidney disease. Right now he has to go to dialysis three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. He is constantly drained, constantly looks sick, no body weight, no muscles, he seems to be all water and he looks older. He is around 45 but he looks like he's 60 to 70 years old. If you looked at him you would think he was 60 just by looking at him.

My relationship with my father is good. Always! Definitely! African-American males may not have a good relationship with their father. A lot of people don't have one. I personally have a good relationship with my father. I think my dad holds together a positive role model to me and influence to me. He is someone to look up to. I am a male child and I need a male role model.

I think most African-American males do have relationships with their fathers. Fortunately, I would think they might. I don't know. I can't tell from friends. But then again it's always that strong mother type that if the mother is responsible she can do both the positive role model and the authority. I believe probably everything will be okay. I think not having that male figure then means the mother had to work that much harder constantly. If you don't have a father, then you have a one income household. It is more work for the mother.

There are three brothers including myself. [I]n the process there are four of us guys. Next year, I might apply for school once everyone else is settled. It could be next year, I'm not sure. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 914-1035)

However, I think my brother was on Academic probation but I know what it means, I didn't know why. . . . [T]here was a range of reasons but I didn't know like which one or there may have been more than one.

I think my brother is just did not focused enough. First year, I think he wasn't focused enough. But being kicked out of something and quitting something are two different things. You quit something, I have no respect for

anyone who quit[s] anything. . . . [O]nce you commit yourself to something I don't think you should quit. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 2029-2056)

My mother [has] two brothers and three sisters. My mother is day care provider and so is both of her sisters and my grandmother. They are very successful. . . . My uncle works at my other uncle's job. On my father's side there are three sisters and two brothers. I am closer to [my] mother's side. I know his two sisters but I do not know the other third one. I think she works in accounting or something like [that]. The two brothers were playing professional football (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1060-1117)

My mothers' husband is lazy. My mother is only one that even works in the house and he helps out with the day care. I am not going to take that away from him. He does help a lot there. There are times when she ask me for money I believe he should be working. He is lazy. I have not ask the question of why he is not working. They make enough money. She makes a lot of money but she also has a lot of bills. She is like me I mean. . . . She takes care of many. . . . I cannot compare myself to her because she takes care of a lot more people then I do. I help people but sparingly. She takes care of people and the family. She pays my brother's bills but he deserve it. My little brother who is 21 [years] old. Everyone loves him because he is far most social person in my family. He is real, all personality.

He is dark skin and [has] long hair braids. His passion is football too. He will joke with you and laugh all you want but when he gets in the gym he will bench press 400 lbs. He is crazy. I have never seen anybody like that even Jim would look up to him. To say that is crazy because [my friend] Jim was freaking masculine and eveything. He was not that strong but he was masculine. Everything I liked the most about Jim and the reasons Jim was good at football is because he was so passoniate and aggressive in what he did. Jim would not intimidate any body. My brother is natural just dumb strong [Laughter]. I do not know were he gets that kind of strength. It is crazy strength that kind of strength is crazy. Once I got stuck in the wintertime my brother pushed me out of the snow. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 2077-2110)

I wonder why we did not have this interview right after I graduation. I would have remembered everything about this book instead of three years after the fact. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 125-135)

Troy

Troy was part of Cohort I. He graduated in 2005 and is presently (2011) attending The JKelly University majoring in Criminal Justice. He is single with three

children from two different women. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Demographics and Prior Attitude to Enrolling in the Advance

My name is Troy and I am Black African-American. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1-26)

I heard that you could get a college credit. That was the only thing I was worried about because I was going to college after high school. (Original Transcript Number Lines 55-75)

Prior Perception to Enrolling in the Advanced Placement Biology Class

I think I took Biology my junior year and then A.P. Biology my senior [year]. I had to get permission from somebody. I think I got a C in Biology so maybe they thought I could handle A.P. I can't remember who gave me the permission to get in A.P. Biology class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 28-53)

I knew Ms. Halasa was teaching the class and . . . I knew that she didn't lecture totally in class and that did influence me because I was comfortable with her and her style of teaching. (Original Transcript Number Lines 73-83)

Again, I did not hear anything from anybody else about the class prior to taking it. I had Ms. Halasa previously and I knew that she didn't lecture totally in class and that made me feel comfortable taking the AP Biology class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 999-1003)

Perceptions of Pedagogy

When looking at the A.P. Biology book, I recall the class was hard . . . harder than I expected . . . I mean the material wasn't that hard, it was just taught at [a] fast pace and taking the material in quickly was tough. It's like you didn't have time to let it absorb in your brain. You just learned it and then test, and then test, and then test.

I remember learning about the chromosomes. The book itself wasn't difficult . . . [I]t was like a college prep course which gave you the college experience without having any college experience. When I went to college, I realize[d that the] A.P. Biology class was just like a college course but way more accelerated than a college course. [Laughter] [Laughter] And it was the first time I had a syllabus. (Original Transcript Number Lines 85-131)

I remember many of the projects, the independent studies. I know we had to read . . . a chapter and at the end of each chapter we had the definitions. I know [it] took a whole lot of papers to write out the actual definitions of the words.

[V]iewing the book [now], it's just looks different. The definitions came at the end and some of them did come straight from the book when reading it. At the time, they were real hard words. You wouldn't even know how to pronounce them. You just had to make them out by sounding them out. So, prior the class, the words were not your normal words I would use, especially at that time. (Original Transcript Number Lines 176-199)

It all started with the syllabus. I mean whatever chapter we were on the syllabus would reflect those weeks of work. We would go over that chapter and it was always the same thing. It was like we would read it and we'd do the definition questions, just some packet. I can't remember the packet[s] but I know Ms. Halasa gave them to us. It was a huge notebook.

Ms. Halasa definitely gave us notes and things in that packet for every chapter. Then we turned everything in, [took] the test [and] began the next chapter. Yeah, it was . . . repetitious week after week. I mean the routine wasn't bad but it was boring. I had lost interest in it. I don't know why I did that. At the time I had so many things going on. (Original Transcript Number Lines 370-406)

Perceptions of Labs and Skits

I forgot about the labs. (Original Transcript Number Lines 133-148)

We just had test[s] that were not only one chapter test. [I]nstead there were two or three chapters [in a] test in a week. [Laughter] We had lab fees. (Original Transcript Number Lines 150-156)

There was one lab that I don't know if it was this particular class though [but] you . . . made something. I don't know what it [was], I just know [that] the whole classroom was just full of stuff and even on the walls. We would go to one station and do something. Then we would walk around to another station and do something else. Whatever was created in the middle of the room. I want to say it was the chromosome. However, I do not believe it was chromosome. I can't remember what it was.

The cell [was] what it was, with all the organelles that make up a cell. We would just make it one step at a time, but there were so many different parts that would form this one cell. We did the skit on translation and transcription where we were making a protein. Again, we would go from one station to another station. That's what it was you had to make this thing and by the time you got done, it was . . . a protein that you made. It was an analogy that you had to get it and pick it up from a special place. . . . [We joked about it and called it] "The girl" (Laughter.) Yeah, that was a fun lab. I liked that lab. That was one that

really sticks out . . . from all the labs [that] I learned [from] the most. I knew the material off of that lab. I'm sure I did alright on that test. It just stood out so much more than the other labs, especially the way it was broken down into three or four . . . stages. It was easier to take in then I could read from the book. It was like a shortcut. . . . You got everything instead of reading [about] it. [Y]ou could actually see how it may develop and you can get this one final thing. (Original Transcript Number Lines 444-489)

Perceptions of Ms. Halasa and Other Teacher(s)

Like I mentioned earlier, I knew I was going back to Ms Halasa's style of teaching. I know a teacher can teach me because Ms. Halasa was interesting. I barely went to sleep in her class. I did all this, especially when I had her class after lunch. [Laughter] I had her after lunch then I [went] to track. I would have track meet the next day and I'd come back to . . . class, still loving it. I mean you [talking to Ms Halasa] got my attention. I'm learning. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1313-1319)

School prior to A.P. Biology was slow pace. And then when you got to A.P. Biology you had to care because it was fast pace. It's just the teaching. I think schools should be changing in the way they are teaching. You know if you got a teacher [who] doesn't really care and then you can tell. If everybody in the class is just saying this person doesn't care, then that means it. Because we [are] just the students, I don't think our opinion really matters. But, in Ms. Halasa's class, it did matter. Because I mean we'll tell her something and then she would apply it.

She would not just let it go in one ear and go out the other. If we didn't know how to do something she would stop and then she would break it down and then tell us how like 1, 2, 3 how it works. Then afterwards, we would understand. She would keep going but unlike another teacher who use to tell us "Yeah, this is how it works" then just pass on without even breaking it down. You get that whole sentence like when in your class doing your work you don't even understand it but you're still passing. It's like some, I'm not saying that all, just some teachers don't really care but they get paid. The students did talk about this. We talk[ed] about this a lot. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1758-1771)

Perception of Classmates

I did not interact with many of peers in the class except for MarsB, Noremac and Fannie. I did not feel any tension or discomfort being in that class because I knew everybody in there was smart. No, this did not intimidate me. I can handle it. Some of my classmates failed, but they had better study habitats for sure. They stud[ied] more than I did. I am sure they stud[ied]. I did not get intimidated. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2626 -2652)

I did not study with anyone. [One of his classmates] MarsB is very smart. He is really smart. MarsB was chubby dude and [he and] my cousin who went to Tuebay High School were friends. My cousin who is really smart and MarsB was real smart. [W]hen we got to high school I do not know what happen[ed]. [Laughter] MarsB just did not care. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2730-2757)

Perception of May Advanced Placement Test

I remember the A.P. Biology May exam for the college. [Laughter] I didn't like that exam. I was expecting the exam material to be the same as in the book. I mean it was the same stuff, but when I took the exam we were so far ahead. The questions were so far back from the beginning of that year. At that time, I just studied and remembered whatever chapter I was at the time. Then after that I would forget what happened and move onto another chapter because I passed the test. And like most of the stuff you remember some of it, but for the most part you remember whatever chapter you are on and whatever you had to learn, whatever else was on the table, so you'd learn that. I got some of the questions, I believe, I didn't do good on that test. [Laughter]

No, I did not remember my score on the May Exam. I did not think that the score reflected what I learned in the class. . . . I knew a lot but the test was not on the topics I knew. I believe they just found a question that probably was in the fine print. Then they asked you what it meant. . . .

We had the practice tests. I did not take [them] seriously. I would not look at the practice test and see what to expect on the test tomorrow. I don't think I took the practice test and just looked to see if I knew what I knew. Then if I didn't know specific questions or [what] we talked about, I would go read the book. The book really wasn't helping me because I'd sit there and just hear this guy talking [and didn't] even know what [it] mean[t]. I would just put it altogether for the most part. Some of the questions were good, I mean you know the same as the big test, but some of questions were not. (Original Transcript Number Lines 491-546)

Cheating Ring – “Comments on Integrity”

Noremac and Fannie were in [my] class but they got caught cheating. [Laughter] I remember Ms. Halasa pulled in MarsB, Noremac and Fannie, and . . . asked me if I was cheating. I said “No” then . . . [she] whipped out my test and I had no answers. [Laughter] I did not have any of the questions answered and then she told me to go back to my seat. I did not study for that particular test at all and I did not answer all the questions. The next day, MarsB told me that Ms. Halasa told him not to say anything. I did not say anything about it . . . at all but I was prepare[d] to be funny about it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2821-2833)

I remember the next day, [another student in the class,] Sue, told everybody that we were cheating. I totally remember Ms. Halasa pulling me aside before class and told me do not say anything about the cheating. I totally remember that I was going to say some jokes to Sue about it. It was nothing mean but “Oh WE! SO WE are Cheating! NOW!”

It was obvious Fannie and Noremac were sitting next to each other. As for MarsB and I, [we] were on two separate sides of the tables and were nowhere near them. The next day, Ms Halasa called everyone up told us that someone was cheating and she went through Noremac’s and Fannie’s test first. She saw they [had] the exact same answer[s].

Then she looked at mine. I told her that I was not cheating. I did not even answer all the questions. Then she looked at MarsB’s [who] was not cheating either. I remember Ms. Halasa and Mr. Weigle called every college and ask[ed] what their cheating policy was if you got caught in their college cheating. You were done! [Laughter] You are done! You are done! Noremac and Fannie, they got no credit and they still had to stay in the class. Ms Halasa made them stay enrolled in the class but they went to in-school. They got an F5. I still talk to Fannie. Her and Noremac are best friends I do not think he used her. They both have their own money. Noremac is not at all that he seems to be. I figure that all out. [Laughter] The first year of college, I noticed he was not smart. We hung out with him in my first year of college and I did not really see her. When I did see Fannie, I just say “Hi” and “Bye.” (Original Transcript Number Lines 2654-2728)

Comments on the Link Between Science Grades and Effort

The grading scale was a regular grading scale . . . [I]n college, in some classes, they still use it. I am saying that’s the scale for college though. I don’t know if the scale for my other high school classes. I can’t remember that. (Original Transcript Number Lines 158-174)

See like when I look back and I see that I got an A in Human Resources Cluster, and then there was a class, Issues of Science, Science Processing Skills with B’s in there, American Government is B’s and I got a few C’s here and there but overall a lot of my course were with a D. (Original Transcript Number Lines 597-602)

I took Physical Science my freshman year. I remember taking Biochemistry my sophomore year with Ms. Halasa. Then A.P. Biology during my senior year and at that time I got D both semesters. I took Issue of Science and I got a B. I’d say it’s always near the end of the course. I wasn’t taking it serious.

I remember where I was when I found out that I got a D and passed the A.P. Biology class. [Laughter] I was in the auditorium getting ready for the

graduation ceremony and I owed Ms. Halasa some papers. I believe I was making up those papers while in the rehearsal and I brought them to her. I think I was down there most of the day. She came down there at first part of the morning. I recall running away [Laughter] when I saw Ms Halasa in the auditorium. I ran. [Laughter] I ran.

Later that afternoon, I gave Ms. Halasa a hug. [Laughter] I was crawling on the [Laughter] [Laughter] Oh man! I was crawling on the floor! [Laughter] On the floor! I grabbed Ms. Halasa's leg and I hugged her. I just took a deep breath. I was happy it wasn't an F. I was scared I wasn't gonna graduate if I had an F.

I remember her saying something. I don't know. I think she was saying all "I got to do this, do it." [She was saying something about "just stay at it. Just stay at it." Some of the stuff, like you really ain't gonna pass everything; you could always try, just make sure you stay up with it and keep up.

And there were people in the class that failed. They failed. They failed. They failed that semester. I mean they didn't need it for graduation but they did fail that semester. Yeah. (Original Transcript Number Lines 199-369)

Comments on Work Ethic

[Laughter] Being honest! I didn't like the course. I didn't like it. I mean I liked it before. I felt afterwards, oh man, it was too much. It was too much. It was just. I just think everything being thrown at me at once. That's what I'm saying.

No, [it was] just the juggling [I hated.] [T]he content was alright. It was just the paces, learning the content. I want to say we did probably a chapter a week maybe and probably by Friday you had to turn everything in, test Friday, practice test Thursday maybe. And the chapters in this book [were] maybe like 40 pages maybe to a chapter. [Laughter] It's just cramming. That's what it was. It was just you had to cram every week, week after week, after week.

It was full-time in high school. My day was from eight o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then I would go to sports and then I would go to work. Then I'd ice my legs [in the evening after track]. I didn't have time to study. I usually uh, like I'd look at some when I was at work. When we got down time or we'd get sent home early some days on practices. Usually on Saturdays or Sundays, I would go through the syllabus and try to get ahead a little bit. (Original Transcript Number Lines 547-595)

Then we took and turned everything in and take the test, began the next chapter. The same routine and same thing! It's repetitious week after week. I mean it's the same thing. It was the content that was boring. The routine wasn't bad and it was boring. [By the end of year] I had lost interest [in A.P. Biology]. I don't know [why] . . . At the time I had so many things going on. — track, football and I was working maybe 30-35 [hours] a week. I was in football in the

fall and track was in the spring. We did bad that year in football and then we was we did alright in track.

We went to regional for track . . . [W]e were near the end [of theyear] where I had to turn in all that homework and all of the late papers that I missed. [B]y the time I came home from a track meet or something, I'd be exhausted and just ice my legs and go to sleep. I would wake up the next day [and] try to catch up in the morning but that ain't never worked. [The other teachers] didn't like me doing other people's homework in their classes and taking up their time with somebody else's studies. (Original Transcript Number Lines 390-442)

Study

My freshman and all freshman-sophomore year, I really didn't care about a lot of this stuff only because I figured I got four years. I mean, I could make everything up, if I really had to. Getting down to crunch time, I had to go to summer school and everything. But it was just that sense of being young. I really didn't care my first two years.

Oh, just take their time to read the material. Look over it because it's all repetition. If you got definitions, go over the definitions more than once. They say, I believe that you read 18 times and it's embedded in your brain, so just look at it more than once. That's it, I think. Yeah, just study. None of this stuff is like really hard you just gotta figure out the way that you learn. The way that you understand something and if you figure that out than nothing is hard. It's not hard. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 618-635)

My study habits should have been the same ones I have now, just read the material. Get a better understanding for the material. Do whatever you need to. If you don't understand the word, get a dictionary read every word, find [its] meaning. First couple of years of college, we used to do study groups. My study habits is just, I feel like I can do it on my own. But it's fun to study with other people. Cause it's like you're just picking each other's brains about one particular subject that you're going back and forth so that you know that you could help me out if you know something that I don't know. I know something that you don't know. (Original Transcript Number Lines 959-971)

Oh yeah, I am I looking at law books. I mean I look at the teacher's notes before I have class, that way I know what they are talking about. Generally, the teacher always adds something different that I did not know which is interesting. For example, there is thing called "hearsay." If third person heard you and I were talking and someone else overheard it would be "hearsay." There are exceptions to it. If you were dying and that were last your last word, then they can bring someone to repeat what you said. You cannot say that because you are dead. That is part that is interesting to me, that you got rules of the rules, then they got

rules for the rules that clear up this rules right here not this rule, right? There so much stuff, that why I look over it.

Zack and I talked but we were never friends. Landon and Zack were both really silly. . . . Zack and I talked but me and Landon would sit and laugh all day long. MarsB is smart. He was friends with my cousin. My cousin was really smart but they are weird people but smart people. He is security guard at Summa and he got his degree in two years. Maybe he was silly and he went to JKelly University for minute. He did not like their prices so he went somewhere else He earned his four year degree in two years.

Maybe, he studied criminal justices but I am not sure. He went all year to get done [in] summer school. It is silly he tried to get in the police force but he has bad knees [and] that did not work out. We talk but we are not that close. We probably study the same stuff. We were talking then he went to Tuebay High. He graduate 05, the same year as I. He was on the merit roll and honor roll. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2742-2812)

How Advanced Biology Placement Course Helped

When I look back after taking the A.P. course, the things now that I experienced in college it helped me. I'm happy I took it because of college prep. I did not have any experience in college at the time. I just wanted to see . . . what would it be like to go into college better than just going into college not knowing what to expect. So, I believe the course helped me.

I remember saying to Ms. Halasa, "Your class was harder than college." [Laughter] It was harder than college. The A.P. courses were sure harder than college cause I don't believe that college is that hard. My grades in college are B's and C's. You gotta at least maintain a good GPA or they kick you out immediately. I'm still in school so I'm doing alright. It just helped me. Ms. Halasa's class helped me because I get the cramming experience, believe it or not. [Laughter] I feel like I'm a better crammer, like if I have to. By test time, I could just cram the main materials and it's easier, cause I did it once before.

[I had to cram for my] Evidence of Criminal Process class. We went over the reviews and did everything together. At the end of the class, [the teacher] surprised you and told you we were gonna have a quiz the next day. At the same time, I still had another class to go to and I had work. When I came home from work, by that time, I was tired. I went to sleep that night and woke up like at 7:30 in the morning and just started cramming, cramming, cramming till probably I think [until] the class started at 9:45. I got a B on that test and it was just the experience because I never had to cram before, so much material [in] so little time. So, that helped me. The A.P. class taught me about volume of work and it changed my study habits. Since, I've had that course I was able to balance things better in college.

What I'd do was repetition! That's what they all tell you to do is repetition. You read it once, read it again, if you're not doing nothing else sit

down and read it again. And like before I went, I'd read it once and just blow it off because I read it. I did what I was supposed to.

I'll probably read the same chapter maybe three times because something new will always pop up. You'll get a better understanding for it. They'll ask questions and you'll be able to answer the questions because of the repetition, just reading the same things over and over again. It makes it a lot easier rather than just getting everything thrown at you at once.

I feel that Ms. Halasa's A.P. class was a lot thrown at you at once and that's how I feel. I'm thankful for the experience because it was an eye opener. Everything is not like it has been for the past 12 years in regular school. Regular school was slow. That's how I felt. The way that they taught. She would do everything in a week. They would do three weeks then give you a test the fourth week. By the time you'd get the test you already knew everything and I didn't care about it no more. Because you'd read the chapter over and over and over, this, this, this and this. It was slow. I'd say every two weeks; I'd say you'd get a test every two weeks probably on that Monday or something. You don't even care about it anymore. You don't have time not to not care about it because it's coming at you so fast. You just gotta deal with it, basically. Just get your study habits. I believe I have done better if I had better study habits at the time. (Original Transcript Number Lines 869-957)

This A.P. Bio and other things is an experience that helps me keep up with the speed on site. They helped me keep up with the speed of college. You know cause A.P. Biology is so accelerated. [Laughter] I got in college, I thought that it was gonna be that accelerated but it's just a fast pace. It ain't the same pace so I adapted to that pace already. I just have to slow it down some and just understanding, just get the speed, like with the syllabus thing I didn't understand it until I got into college. I mean, you gave us a syllabus but I did not look at it like that. All you gotta do is follow the syllabus and you can get ahead. I just looked at it like it was a schedule. Like you do this, do this or do this. Then like most syllabus in college you know what you gotta do and when the papers due and the kind of papers you need. So, it takes syllabus to look up. I was happy I had experience with syllabus in the A.P. Biology course. I had experience with the speed of the course in the college. It was a nice prep college course. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 2084-2102)

Getting and Giving Advice

I tell all my friends do not have children until they are married. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2568)

Student's Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

I learned something when I can apply it or I can say I can use it, like just getting a better understand[ing] for it. If you can take a word, they can gave you a definition but you can use that same word with the same definition in a different sentence. You can apply it differently. I was that way and Ms. Halasa taught that way. She just didn't lecture most of the time. I mean she would lecture, but she would have visuals. She would throw something like the labs. She had this creative sense of it and I would just remember that part of it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 973-997)

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: ...learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

I like Betty Gardner because you are not learning about things unless you are interested. Let me think . . . I wanted to say you can discover more about subject because things have not been discovered. If you are not interested in learning, you are not interested at subject at hand. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Attitude Scientist

I haven't had science yet. [Laughter] I have to take a science course in college. I'm saving it for my last year. [Laughter]. I'm saving it. Ms. Halasa hurt me that bad. [Laughter] Oh yeah. [Laughter] I'm saving it. She damaged me. I used to like science until I had A.P.[Laughter] and then . . . (Original Transcript Number Lines 2102-2130)

Career College

I am studying Criminal Justice in school right now. I am not there right now because it's December but I will go to fall classes. I decided to study criminal justice. When I was younger I had an infatuation with the law. I wanted to understand the whole process of it and everything. It's like I've seen it from one side, not from experience, but you know from watching other people. I've seen one half of it. The negative part of people getting arrested and the reason they're getting arrested and why they're in jail for so long. I didn't understand the whole part of the amount of time that you get for a crime. I wanted to go into criminal justice field and understand why would someone get this much for doing something so little?

Someone was put away for a long time for an assault. It's felonious assault. I mean it turns felonious when [the victim has] to go to the hospital. Somebody gets their nose broken or something while there in a fight and then you won't see them for at least a year, year and a half, maybe two if you are lucky. I didn't understand why but I had to go into criminal justice field to figure out everything adds up. It's just that the priors in being a prior criminal, that goes against them. It's just like strikes, basically.

I understand now everything else after that. I saw the negative side of it but there was another side that also sparked my interest which was the positive. It's that feeling of getting the bad people, off the street, especially, if you are surrounded by a good community. You got a couple or a handful of people that's just makes something negative which is positive. That's kind of irritating.

And you see how happy the people are from cleaning up the streets basically. I mean I haven't experienced it. I mean I can look from the outside and understand like why people are happy. I can understand that everybody's not perfect and were all human and all that crap. We make mistakes.

So you can see where just clean it up and I don't know where I'm going with this. [Laughter] Yeah, I saw the negative. Not me personally experiencing it, but people around me experiencing it. I recall particular situation that made me really think of criminal justice that stands out in front of me and makes it real personal.

When I was younger, I want to tell you I was probably 12 maybe 13, somewhere in that period, my cousin was the closest person my age who I hung around. He had gotten in some trouble. I still don't know what he did to this day.

I didn't really care. I asked him I thought it was just sort of breaking and entering because I know he used to always break into people's houses and steal stuff. I never went out with him. Yeah, he did it. I mean he'll just pop up with some stuff and I know his mom didn't buy it. He'd just steal it.

I know when he did steal then he had to take a "vacation." I don't believe I'd seen him for maybe three years. Then after that I was just wondering what did he do to get three years and it's his first offense, but at the time I didn't understand the values of having priors. He had a couple priors as a juvenile so they just kept him in longer. It was a shame. He got charged with the same offense. So, that's what I was thinking. He had the same offense charges, now he gotta stay longer.

I was 12 and he was 13. At 13 years old, when he went to jail, I didn't see him until he was about 16. At the time, I just didn't think about the mistakes he was making or ask him how he felt after his vacation. Oh, I mean he hasn't been back. He took a dozen vacations. I don't think he broke into anybody's houses. I don't even think he got in trouble with the law. That's probably one event that really rehabilitated that part. [Laughter] I think he was going around with the people around his neighborhood too. I think he was robbing the neighborhood and at the time he was the only kid in the neighborhood so 2 plus 2 make 4.

When I saw this happen at 13, he was my closest cousin and he was my confidant. I already knew he was doing that kind of activity prior; it did not influence me to do this because [Laughter] my mom and family basically just scared the crap out of me. My mom just sat me down and told me how jail was. She said she was there for maybe a couple of hours. [Laughter] She was 12 years old and little stories at the time so she had told me it's just lonely. Then you hear the stories from all my friends [who were] on the other side that had actually been in jail and had jail time and did years. They just come out a whole different person. They go in jail smiling and come out just mean and don't really care about a whole lot of stuff anymore.

I don't know probably the loneliness affected them because it's like when you get shipped out to other states and it's hard for people's families to come and see them. You know when the weather changes it gets cold outside so people don't want to take no walks to the mailbox to drop off a letter and send you money to get some food or the extra stuff. I guess they are doing nothing and "don't nobody really care about me if you can't do this." So, they go in and they come out cold and coldhearted. It was like I didn't want to be like that at all. Just I didn't think it was fun at all. [Laughter] To go in smiling and coming out just angry at the world and you noticed right away that they came out angry.

My one friend had got wrongly accused of something and he had did some time. Then after further investigation the decision was reversed because they were lying about everything. I forgot how they had found out but they did. I was just like how could you send him to jail and you don't really know if he did it or not? So, that's why I had gotten into [criminal justice] cause they say, "without a reasonable doubt." I'm like if you were even thinking he probably didn't do it but

you still send him to jail. Then find out a couple years later that he really didn't do it and the most you're gonna tell him is "Sorry," you make a mistake.

It was the jury that put him in. Obviously, the jury listened to the information and they felt without a doubt they decided to send him. It was it was the court system, basically. You can say "Sorry" but "you took away my life for something. I told you in the first time that I didn't do [it]." He really can't do nothing more about it, it happened. He learned a lesson from it, just stay away from the wrong crowd, and stay away from the people.

By [pursuing criminal justice,] I believe I have a better understanding in order to help. If I know the law and know your situation, I have a better chance of helping you out. It will be better than like somebody else such as the prosecutor. I mean you get a court appointed attorney most of the time. They got thousands of people in their case, hundreds of people. I ain't gonna say thousands and it's probably 32 people per lawyer maybe. They just handed you over to him. He don't really care because they don't even look at the evidence. [What I want to do is] just help somebody out, you know what I mean, just give them better help, better than just saying okay you did it and you deserve this.

We got an internship. I haven't got there yet. Probably this year maybe in spring I will do [an] internship. I just want to. If anything I think working with people like my age, you get the peers and then you can get them to understand. When they're younger, probably [you] ain't gonna be able to tell them but they probably won't understand it until they actually experience it themselves. The older people they look at "Oh yeah you're young so you can't tell me nothing." But then, after I could get an understanding with people in my age group. I can ask "Why are you doing this?" You know what I'm saying, just go in there and change what you are doing now. Then when they get older it's positive, still have time to be positive. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1484-1495)

I have about a year left of classes. I believe around 18 credits left to graduate. Instead of taking a loan, I working two jobs and saving money to take a class or two. I will have Bachelor degree. The problem is that my first two years I did not really do anything. I just did enough to be able to stay in school. I just need to take what classes I messed up on. I have to make up for three classes during my first two years that I failed because I did not know what college was [Laughter] I heard different stories but to really experience it is a different thing. I just goofed around and all that. I did not feel my advisor helped in college but there is help and you have to go get the help. I just did not know the ropes. I went to the writing labs and math labs. They will help you if you wanted. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Race

The prompt:

Historically being an African-American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

I've never experienced that. The way I feel...[n]othing should limit you. There's always an alternate route around to find. If this guy right here don't like me at this company, he don't have to move the company around. I can just go somewhere else and get hired in the company. There's no reason to have limitations.

I don't believe that race is a limitation in my life. I believe it's a limitation but I just haven't experienced it. Most CEO of the company, you can only see a handful of Black people sticking out. We had 42 presidents and now the 43rd that's Black. It just sticks out. Some people is either gonna accept it. But I figure sure whoever wasn't accepting, like gee I'm gonna let you maybe lead this. I'm gonna go around here and find something else and just keep going on it to get my goal. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1207-1211)

I don't know. . . . I think that's the assumption that most people think. It's just the white tees, just the white tees and the baggy stuff. Like most people don't walk near you if you do have baggy clothes. Most of them have probably pictures on their shirts and a rubber band on my arm is significant for selling things...

Most people that sell drugs wear a rubber band on their arm. I mean, I just wear it just to wear it. I just wear the rubber band and put it on my arm, I mean I just pick up a rubber band and throw it on my arm. I mean I just seem so it's probably just habit now.

Cause I've been doing it for so long. But it's just I mean I'm used to it. So that's why I look past it. Like you can do ahead and say whatever you say, but if you have a conversation with me I bet it wouldn't be the same what you thought. You know what I'm saying.

No, No. I didn't feel uncomfortable, I just felt out of place maybe [At Panera]. I wasn't uncomfortable. I was just out of place.

I mean that is definitely why because you growing up in this area, you know the people, this is all you know and then you go somewhere else with the same people, with the same mentality, but they are all you know and then they look at you and you look at them and you don't recognize nobody so first thing you think is something negative.

I joined CRAYOLA [multicultural student group] for two years. It was alright. I mean they didn't really say anything that ruffled my feathers or anything. It was just when they talked I think they would just talk because this is what they seen, not actually seen. But it's like they know this happened but they never experienced it at first. Because when you talk to somebody that really experienced something you could tell that they experienced it you ain't gonna just

I wonder if he did this. I mean, you can see the emotion and everything. When they were talking about stuff, I could just look at them and know that they are just talking because you know about it. You just never really experienced it because like if you really experienced like racism or something heavy, you'd be mad and all dismissed. Then, if you've never experienced it you'd be mad because you know that's the thing to do. He called me this so I'm gonna get mad. But for what?

When, I just walked into Panera with Ms. Halasa. I survey the scene, I looked to see what everybody is doing. I don't think half the people were even looking at me. If I looked, I would have known what they were doing, it was just me being in here. This ain't the type of environment that I am used to. I know right now I'm standing out so it wasn't like me just being - Oh, my God! I'm gonna do it just I know that I'm standing out right now and it's just the way that I feel.

I know. [Laughter] I'm used to it now. I like when I look at it I don't even look it. I told you this is my first time me ever coming in here. This is my first time. I don't know how long this store been here. I shopped at the regular stand down a couple blocks from here, but this is the first time I ever walked in here, probably because nothing really in here just excited me to come in. I'd come with somebody else, I'm like not coming in here by myself.

I'm comfortable. I feel comfortable. It's just; I don't know how to say it. I'm not comfortable. You know what I mean. I'm comfortable, but I'm not comfortable. So, it's alright. It equals out!

No, I would not walk into this place again without Ms Halasa. I would walk in this place with another friend? Yeah, I'll come back but not on my own. Yeah, I'll come back here. I don't know. I think anything you do if you get the experience from it, that's good. It's I mean positive experiences [are as] good as negative experience[s] cause you learn something (Original Transcript Number Lines 1777-1934)

I thought until 12th grade that a Black man would go to jail if dated a White woman. No one told me when I was young not to. Only my cousin George dated out of race. I remember my grandmother in wheel chair who was yellow [interracial child of Black and White parents] and my aunt looked White explain the difference between Black and White to me when I was little. I heard couple of weeks that people think mixed girls follow whatever their fathers are. My area is just Black and White for me. Now, there are many Chinese and other races.

Limitations to me were about jobs and resources not necessarily social limits. When I think of social I just like everyone else, there is low income, middle class and upper class within each of the three stages low mid and high of each. Where you live is where you learn how to act. Society teaches you a lot. Me living up there, I feel so out of place because it is too quiet in comparison where I grew up. It was quiet where I used to live but majority of my life was on hill. It wasn't really quiet. It doesn't make me feel uncomfortable. I just think it

is unusual because when people leave their doors unlocked, these White people. It is not safe to me you know what I mean. I can believe people leave their doors unlocked at 3:00 am and anyone could come into the house and do anything. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Influences

When I was younger and I worked all those hours, I just wanted some money because more of my friends at the time were doing the negative thing. They would get a lot of money. Probably at the time, I was trying to keep up with them but, there again the negative [had] to overcome the positive. I mean I'd give my mom money but she'd probably give it back or hide it under my pillow.

I consciously trying to show [or say to] my friends, look, I'm not going down that road. I have another option. Yeah, that's what it was. I'm not going down that road. Cause like now if you got kids involved. I'm too old to be running the streets or going to jail. I won't see my kids for four or five years later. They look at me and I look at them [and] they [w]on't even recognize me. People, they got that option. They can walk right past their father and do not even know who he was. I want to be a presence in their lives

I just want to do what's right in their lives. I have two children from the same mom and another one from another. Ah man, I was being stupid. I was in track and I was getting a lot of attention from the other species. But it was just like I was in a relationship with one and the other one came a month later and I had went back to the one I was with the first time. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1371-1428)

There were 13 of us together my freshman year and 12 of them didn't graduated from high school. I was the only one that passed. I don't really know what motivated me. . . . It was probably my family, my mom basically. She wanted me to graduate. I graduated because I wanted to graduate myself. I didn't want that lifestyle. I had to transition to something different.

There is strong influence of running the streets to run the streets. I mean some of them had older brothers and with the older brothers' thing—you know like my older brother did it so I'm gonna do it. One of my friends, the older brother played football. He did track, but he was real good at basketball so he played basketball freshman year. That was it. Then after that, probably 10th grade he dropped out. He's doing the same thing he's been doing since tenth grade.

Dealing drugs is the fast lifestyle because you know the job you work two weeks, get paid one time. They can work the same amount of time and they double whatever I made in two weeks. Probably even triple in whatever I make in two weeks, in probably two days.

I did not get involved cause the means don't justify the ends. I mean they mean to do it, but then the end result you can go to jail for life. [Laughter] Over a

few dollars, you know what I mean, it just don't do it for me. I could make probably a hundred thousand dollars in probably four to five months, but just to get caught with a large amount of cocaine don't make a lot of sense. It's not worth it. That's another reason I already know I don't see them doing anything. They got nice clothes and all but life is more than just having nice clothes. They don't even have cars they just walk around with lots of money in their pockets just walking around. They don't even own a house, they don't have a car, all they have are clothes that they are spending it on.

As for relationships with women, of those 12 friends, I think they all got children. No, apparently having children does not change their mind. They just do the same thing.

I think people in education and the community can do to help change the mindset of young people, especially young African-American males. I think just show[ing] them a different way, like there's always more than one way. I was influenced with internal motivation. My coach Rulo [North High] said to me to start looking around you and see what happening. I had that same conversation with my friends and said "Hey look around, look what's going on with all our friends, their freaking screwing up" and that didn't stop them.

I did said it but that's peer pressure. It is another form of peer pressure. They think when you say peer pressure you're already thinking negative but there is positive peer pressure. I could go up to you and say like, "Man, you do not have to do this." I did go to one of my friends. He said "I ain't gotta do nothing," he showed me like he had at least \$7,000-\$8,000 in his hand at one time, and I was like alright. Then probably two weeks later he was in jail. I mean you gotta show them this thing is not what's everything is about. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1637-1757)

Sports

My freshman year I wasn't taking it serious. They say freshman year is your funniest year. Going in, I really didn't care about a lot of stuff. I was hanging with the wrong crowd and all that, I wasn't even into sports. I didn't play sports until the 10th grade. (Original Transcript Number Lines 597-621)

I mean they told me to listen but I was just young at the time. I didn't really want. I didn't really care about what people were saying at the time. I started caring. It was when I started getting active in sports and one of my teachers had told me to just sit down and watch my friends and watch, "How many of them will graduate? How many like at the end of the year who would still be left in school and who wouldn't?"

Everybody, I hung out with at the time probably dropped out in the 10th grade. About the end of the 10th grade year, that's when I started. I [had] seen my environment around me. We did the same thing and it was true because like I'm experiencing it so.

Rulo said everything “Just sit there and watch them.” I sat there and watched them. Nobody was doing their work basically. We all come home after school just play around until the time to go into the house. Just do the same thing after that and wouldn’t care about the studying. (Original Transcript Number Lines 637-659)

I mentioned earlier my mother sat me down and told me at 12, “Let me tell you how jail is.” I don’t wanna go there you know. Cause it got to the point where it was the same thing every day. We would come hang out. We came here to play football. We used, but you can’t run the same way you used to, because you smoke all that stuff. Don’t even react the same way, so I just started playing sports and separating myself from them and this stuff.

It was Mr. Yanculeff [Physical education teacher] that got me into sports. Mr. Yanculeff had told the coaches. He’d seen I was fast and told one of the coaches. One of the coaches came and talked to me. Then Rulo came and talked to me and told me that watch my friends basically. Rulo was a real influence for me, personally.

It was the coaches. I’d say Tim and Ralph O’Hare cause they would inspire just not to have me on the team. I mean you could tell like they were grateful to have me. Kids doing other things but as a team they teach the values of what a team is. I didn’t know none of them. I played football when I was younger; but it wasn’t like it was in high school. You know the whole team values, you know they care. [Laughter]

Nothing. [Laughter] Nothing. Remembering . . . Nothing. It’s just that [Laughter] I’m being soft that’s all. It’s emotional. Well, that is the first time I felt part of something. It was in high school. Oh yeah, I still have support; I’m not playing sports or anything. But you can tell from the people that I keep around me are around me because they want to be around me. I just don’t have . . . any negative interfering with my positive at the moment. That’s one reason why I feel so positive in everything. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1076-1141)

So Yanculeff had a lot of influence on me. I like that cranky old dude. I love that cranky old man. YEAH! Mr. Yanculeff tries to act like he does not care but he cares. He cares he broke it down for me. He looks at the “bum.” [Laughter] Yanculeff told it yeah yeah yeah the way Yanculeff said it he does not sugar coat. It to Yanculeff everyone is “bum” and “a hole.” He say that to everyone in his class “he is BUM he is Bum he is bum.” He did used the A word. He called everyone “assholes” that is how everybody was. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2579-2614)

Environment

[W]hen you grow up, you see the people in your neighborhood driving around in nice cars, laughing and everything. You know they want the same thing but they don't see like all they've been through to get all that stuff. All the time they've been in jail and everything.

Even after they spent time in jail that didn't really change them. [Be]cause everybody in jail got the same mind state. Their mind state is negative. . . . You know we all did something that we don't want to admit to or something is messed up. That's why we act the same way we do. Those all in jail just compare everything up, they just do this, this, this and this, but I'm still in jail. I don't really care. I'll do my five years and go back and don't care about it again. If I got to come back, I got to come back. Oh, man. Probably just free house and a cot.

This one dude I met he had did six years for attempted murder. He got out jail but came back talked the same stuff. I don't care about going to jail and next week he's back in jail. But I don't know for how long. But I mean it's just if that's all you know, that's all they're gonna do. That's why they're doing it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1160-1189)

[From my class] Tidas Jones[i]s still in jail. He ought to get out maybe this year or maybe next year. I'm not even positive. He went to jail right after graduation. It was crazy. At first I didn't think he was gonna graduate, then he walked the stage. I was like he ain't as bad as I thought. Then he did what he did and went to jail.

I don't know. [P]robably maybe a couple months ago before he did it, he had told me a story about some dudes had jumped him and his friends. He started carrying a gun ever since then. I think that one experience triggered everything to go off on him. After that he wasn't even the same Jones. He would just walk around with guns; I don't care about a whole lot of crap in life. It's just like one event.

I mean he wasn't a friend, but we had mutual friends so we were still cool. We just [weren't] close cause he was from the bottom [of the Hill] and I was on the top. And that does make a difference in the Hill. It really does matter where you live. Cause it[s] just the people you keep around. You have an understanding how things operate here, and then how things operate over there. Just like the way you act; what was the in-thing, you know, the kind of shoes you're wearing from what you wear these up here to what you wear down there. We don't wear them, so we can tell a person's not from around your neighborhood; you don't live here and talk like me.

Gangs were an issue when I was going through North High. Yeah, I got involved in gangs, in fact that was my 12, 13, 14 friends. We were in a gang in my freshman and sophomore years. The gang was called Mini Park that was on the top of the hill. In addition, on the hill at that time was the Squad. We had the

bottom of hill called Hawks and probably West Akron Hilltop on the top and bottom from Valleys and Circle on Hill. They had all kind of gangs.

At that time they would beat people up. What we did was we'd have two people fight each other, whoever won would get in. And that was just the initiation [of] getting in [to] the gang at the time.

Our gang wasn't as intense as most gangs out there. You know with the same mentality, once you were in you always in. We was just a whole lot of kids with nothing to do so we hung out with each other every day and gave ourselves a name. It wasn't like gangs in California with Bloods and Crips. You can't get out. I wouldn't doubt that Akron has one of the largest gang activities. Everywhere you go, I believe there's a gang everywhere you go in Akron.

The certain thing I was wearing or looked a certain way indicated what gang you were in. It was probably the area I lived in. Cause, if worse come to worse everybody from the Hill knew we had two gangs on the Hill. But if somebody from the Westside were to come over, everybody clicked up against the Westside to fight over there. Man, I don't even know half the fights we got into. They would just call everyone and we just fought everybody else. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1497-1641)

Friends

My friends were going in a different direction than I was. They totally "skipped." I mean they dropped out of school. [Of] all my friends that I hung with the first couple years, I'm the only person that graduated [Laughter] from the entire group. I would say that's probably 12 maybe 13 people. I don't know why they did not. They [weren't] motivated, I think. They had their minds on other things, like what everybody was doing in the neighborhood at the time.

To be honest[Laughter], it was drug dealing—heavy, heavy drug dealing... [A]nd if they wasn't they was doing drugs, [they were smoking] marijuana and all that other stuff. I could see it. I sit and watched them. The way that they act and how a person's body reacts after you've smoked marijuana. You can tell them that it's fun, but you don't look like you're having fun. You just look like you are hungry and you tired. I didn't see what fun it was and I just didn't fully understand how it was just one thing that you really needed to do like every day.

Obviously, when this was occurring, I did not participate. Not at all! Oh, you get the peer pressure to go ahead. You ain't got nothing to do. You're not doing anything. You might as well and I just didn't see it, I didn't want to do it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1005-1074)

Oh, yeah I see those old friends every now and then and they are still doing the same thing. They are in and out of the court system. NOW, they come and ask me [Laughter], "What could I get if I get caught with this and get caught with that?" I tell them their options. They just go with it even though they know.

I don't think they are limited cause you always have options. It's just the money is fast cash. They just didn't learn as fast. I mean partly, [it] is mostly all [that] they know since they're doing since they were little.

My friends started goofing around obviously during freshman and sophomore year. [I]t did not start in middle school or elementary school.... [Then] we were always getting in trouble, getting bad grades and all that [but] you gotta be in the house—[m]y mom being everything and never staying late in school. By that time we got to high school they [my friends were] making money. They really don't care about their parents telling you to come in the house at 12. "I can't come in the house at 12, if I got more money to make."

The parents knew what they were doing. Definitely! I mean you have to know because "You got a \$100.00 pair of shoes on your feet and I didn't buy them for you." They didn't get them for them, then they came from somewhere? "How did you get them?" Then you don't really have an excuse. You say, "I don't know."

Obviously my mom talked to me at 12 and said "Hey you know here's the deal." Then she went back to college, and in the back of my mind, [I thought to myself,] "Hey, I'm gonna beat you in the long run." My mom and I have this relationship that I care about what she thinks of me.

My other 12 friends did have some type of relationship with someone in their house, cause they wasn't out here by themselves. They never were like "I'm all by myself." I just think it was the mindset. They wanted to feel independent. Half of them went to jail and like I said they came back with "me against the world" type mentality. And it wasn't like that to begin with. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1271-1310)

Family

I would have been the first to go college. My mother went back to college when I was in the 12th grade. I would have been the first but she graduated with a Bachelor's in Business, I think. She's alright. She was working for this one company but they had to cut back. She was the lowest person on the pole and she was first to get cut. She worked for the hospital when they did that. When they did that to the other company she was just working at, the post office. [Laughter] The post office had cutbacks, so now she's just in between jobs, looking for another job just to get better.

That's the reason I'm still in school cause I wanted to get the Bachelor's Degree. I'll probably go afterward to grad school when I graduate. You know what I'm saying just have one step on her [mom]. [Laughter] I'm challenging her but I do not tell her that. It's all in my head. Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

I got a one brother and two sisters and they are all older. My second sister [who] graduated college I would say we're not close.... [Laughter] Yeah, don't want to count her. I count my mom over her. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1213-1269)

I am have two baby mommas. It was just that I felt like I got caught in the limelight. That's what I feel like I got caught, in the limelight. But the thing I'm doing different is I'm making sure all my kids are around each other. I was young, you know me being the baby all I had is my brother. Me and him is 11 years apart. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1988-1997)

I am a father right now of three children. I feel that I am better now to give advice to my two boys and a little girl. I have a better understanding for that just because I could teach them off my experience but I believe you always got to learn for yourself. I mean I could tell them how to do something, I could help them study. I could try the repetition but my son might learn differently than my daughter, and have to do one thing differently.

I am going to emphasize education to them. They are gonna go to school. I mean the same way it was taught to me. I will sit them down and watch the crowd of people, you wait see. You're going to jail. I mean if you do dirty, you're going to jail. Because of my criminal justice background is easiest for me to describe to someone. I do this for a living. I had already seen and did everything you had done, so just stay in school and school will help you out. Education will help you out.

My relationship with my father is [that] we got close in our older years. He was around [during] my younger years. I just didn't want to be around him. It was just boring at his house. He lived in Riverline Park but I live on top of the Hill at the time. I didn't know anybody around there [his neighborhood]. It's like going to a new school for the first time. Every time you go out here's another one. I didn't know none of them. I don't care to know anybody down there. He was older. Some of my interests are not the same as his interests. I would play video games all day. He don't even have a video game. I just didn't stay around there listening to oldies and all that kind of stuff. I can appreciate now that I'm older cause I gotta kind of like listen to old music now because of him. Now, I can see when my kids come around I gotta have them just don't let them think the same of me when I went over there. Just have something around that they can play with and interact with them.

He didn't play personally with me. He would tell me his track stories. My father ran track too for North High. Every time I see him that's another reason I ran track. Then he started coming to my games till probably the 12th grade year. I finally got the support from him and everything.

It was like my mom supported me when I was in football she came. But she had to work many hours [during] the track seasons. So my dad would come to the track meet and it just felt good having somebody there. I'm gonna do the same for my kids having that presence there to felt good. Being part of their lives is important. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1320-1382)

Right now, I am not with neither one of them [the mothers of my children]—neither one of them. I don't have a good explanation at all. I mean I like them both, I just can't tolerate them. One nags and one is just angry all the

time. I feel like it's all negative. So I try to stay away from that but not [from] my kids.

We all went to the zoo together. . . . I usually have all my kids together cause I want them to know each other. I really don't care about how their mothers feel about that. But today I just had the boys. It was her [their mother's] idea. She just takes them out. It was like spontaneous, like last minute I woke and she had called me up to go to zoo. I said okay. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1418-1460)

My mom and dad split from being with each other when I was [about] three, maybe four years old. My sisters have their own mother. My brother has a different father. Okay, my sisters have the same father, my brother has a different father and, you know, my sisters all have different mothers. In other words my father, biological father, has three children and they're all from different moms. My brother from my mother has a different father. My mother had two different baby daddies in other words. [Laughter].

My father had these two sisters and then your mother was with somebody else at the time. Then my mother had my brother and then later had she had me with my father. Dad has three baby mommas and mom has two baby daddies. Yeah. [Laughter]

My brother wasn't even in half the stuff I did. The only time we really connected was playing videogames. I mean it's different now because we both older. But we still sit down and play videogames because that's just how we bond. My sisters, I really haven't seen my oldest sister since I was 17. She still stays in Akron. I've seen my second sister. I see her most of the time more than that, but that just started happening.

I don't think [that was] because she's was 24 or 25. If she really wanted to see me when I was younger she could of cause she's been driving for, I don't know, how long. I mean with her, she moved to Cleveland when we were young so we never really [got] in contact with each other since we were little. We used to hang out when we were little but not since then. Probably with my older sister it was because of her mom and my dad that she was not part of the family for some reason. It's a whole big story. I really don't understand. I just know what I was told.

No, I have never been with my brothers and sisters all at same time. Right now, we do not bring all our children together either. Probably, the only time that we actually did that would probably be one Christmas. My older sister wanted to do it. Probably, we'll do it. It probably, happened maybe twice but somebody will always be absent, like one sister won't come that year or the other sister won't come the next year. Then my brother moved to Tennessee, so he don't come down. He just come down on holidays. He visits whenever he feels like it.

He needed a change of scenery to get away. That's what he said. Oh yeah! Definitely, it is better because he was down here he was in the army and everything. He messed up his knee. He was in between jobs and he was in a real negative relationship with a girlfriend out of Canton. [A]t the time, you could just

tell that he was real stressed and he was trying to cover it up. He had something happened with him and his girlfriend. He had came down to live with us. He really wasn't doing anything and one day his friend just wanted him to move to Tennessee. He moved to Tennessee, him and his friend fell out he had told me he was homeless for [a] second. He was living at the VFW [Veterans of Foreign War hostel]. He met this girl. Now he got more down there then what he ever had up here because now he has his own house, he has his girlfriend, he has a car and he's just overall doing better for himself. Better than being up here.

We talk a lot. Probably it used to be twice a week but I haven't talked to him for minute. I just be at work most of the time when he calls so I can't just answer the phone and talk to him. I want too. Nope! He don't have no children. I don't think he wants any but I don't know. I ain't never asked him. When he's down here he plays with them and chase them around the house you know. He likes the kids. He's a good uncle [but] he's happy to give them back. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 1936-2080)

Yes, I still live with mom. She loves being a grandmother. She still wanted to kill me. Oh, yah! Especially, when they are all three of them are running around and my oldest is picking on both of them. [Laughter] Then my youngest son is whining crying around and chasing him. My daughter is chasing and whining. They come get me to go get them and she doesn't like everyone yelling in the house. She cannot take screaming—"Yayayayayay!" She cannot take it.

Oh, yah they all do! THEY ALL DO LAUGH and sound like me. Today! Today! Today! I looked and I said this dude is very annoying today. [Laughter] She said "Look at him" and alright I look at him. She said, "You are looking at yourself." Oh, man [Laughter] I was looking at him the stuff he doing today. Oh my God! Oh man! He was like, "I want this! I want that!" I said, "Yeah, we are going to get something to eat." My son said, "I want McDonalds." I replied, "Alright we are going to get McDonalds." My son kept saying, "Are we going to McDonalds. Yet, we are in the zoo for you. I do not care for these animals. [Laughter] I do not care about [the] rhino. I watch Animal Planet." He just kept walking. Then he said, "I am ready to go! I am hungry. Can we get some McDonalds?" I told him, "We are going to get some McDonalds." He repeated, "Are we are going to McDonalds? Are we going to get McDonalds?" Now as we were walking to the car. "I just told you we are going." Oh my GOSH! and then his mom said "If you say one more thing about McDonalds we are not going" and he did not say one more thing. O my God!

He just looking at me, screaming for no reason, no reason! I was sitting and watching TV. "Yayayayay!" I would say "What's wrong?" he would say nothing. "What are you screaming for?" "Yayayaay!" Oh, man he would pick on people and take people's stuff. He just do it and take off... I used to do the same thing when I was older. They are growing faster.

Then my daughter she is loud. She is loud period. She is loud! She does the same thing and will not stop. "I want me juice. I want some juice. I want juice,

dad. I want some juice. I want some juice.” “O, my God! I said, “I am getting you juice.” She will not stop. “I want some juice. I want some juice.” He is alright the young one. [He] is still cool because he cannot really talk. [Laughter] He cannot really talk I tried to read but they do not pay attention to the books.

I have the boys until 4:00. I usually get my daughter everyday but now her grandmother doesn't work anymore. Her mom drops her [off] at mom's [her grandmother's] in the morning. I get her every now then and keep her two to three days. I talk to her every day to see what she doing. I do not see her often as I do see my boys. It varies because before I saw my girl every day and hardly saw the boys. [T]hen I would talk to them. It changes like the seasons. It does not really bother me. I am use to it now cause we use to go to [the restaurant] Chucky Cheese all together. I got a van. I think I should take them to Geauga Lake water park.

I am going to take them out there before I go back to school. Not that hard three of them running around screaming and everyone goes their separate ways. I do not agree with their moms. Only one of them probably, the boys' mom, she is alright. Yeah my daughter's mom does the same before. We have taken the oldest son but I did not take the younger son, yet. I do not think she has even seen him.

Because when I was young I wanted my name to be DeTroy. When my son was born, I did not want to name [him] Troy. I did not want the III, that too much. [Laughter] Too many Troy[s]! Because I named my son De'Angelo and then I named my daughter De'Asia. They are all “De.” (Original Transcript Number Lines 2321-2439)

No! I just did not say anything at all. I was not prepared be to funny about it. No there were no reasons why I was funny and loud in the class all the time. Oh yeah! Now, I have found a parallel between me and my oldest son. Ms. Halasa asked me if “Now do I understand the way you feel about your son asking 475 times about McDonalds maybe that is way some people felt about me?” [Laughter][Laughter] I came to realization today when his mom told me that is you. I looked at him and he looked at me back [Laughter] Do I get on peoples nerves like that for real? I was doing it to be silly but I was getting people nerves! Man! You can tell when you get on people nerves. Oh MY GOD! They do that crap I am feeling the same way like AHHHH do not ask me anymore. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2832-2856)

Girl Friend

When I was younger, I believed I was stressed out. I used laughing back then as a point of dealing with stress. Then recently, the Human Relations class's teacher told me that it [was a] coping mechanism for stress. I laugh cause I look for humor in anything. I do this with everything such as girls walking across the street, I can find something funny about it. I don't laugh for the same reason

anymore as I did or I use to— little stress about girlfriend boyfriend breaking up crap[or] I cannot come outside because I have curfews type of crap. It was nothing big.

Biggest humm stress among girls was when I got into that scene. When the one told me she was pregnant! Oh man ahahah AHHHHHHHHH I can't do this ahhhh o man I just told the other one. I just came out and told it. I called her and just said there was a girl pregnant.

No! they do not like each other at all. One went to North High School the other one went Howard High. My sons' mom is four years older than me. Yeah, we did not even go to school at the same time. (Laugh laugh) I think I was 15 and she was 19. Yeah! Yeah! YEAH [Laughter] YEAH [Laughter] I knew what I was getting into. Yeah, I knew it. Oh No, I did not regret nothing because I learned lessons because she was older than me. Hummm oh no laugh oh no laugh oh no no no no laughing

I did date my sons' mother my freshman year. She is good person. I tolerate her but she just nags a lot, but she do for it for the right reasons. Hummmm, I don't know it is all positive. I need to hear it but I do not need to hear it as often. I play video games a lot. I use to work two jobs and go to school. I quit my one job because my grades were slipping. They would not give me time I need to clear for schools. Now, I play videos on my free time instead I could be out having another job or doing something else instead of playing video games.

I believe she allowed ME to have free time. I do not tell her what to do at all because I do not want her trying to dictate [to] me during mine [time]. She was nagging me because we compare video games to drugs. It is like those who have a crack addict. She says I am addicted to video games and I am not denying at all I spend six or seven hours on video games. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2141-2279)

She went to North High School and Rita Myers is her little sister. She was on track team. She has associate degree and she works out in Barberton. I am not sure what she does. I know she works out in Barberton she is in social work. Having children prior to having a commitment, that is going to be permanent relationship because children are 24/7. (Original Transcript Number Lines 2586-2539)

Reliability of Informant

IS tape recorder still rolling? I do not like the camera. Not at all! [Laughter](Original Transcript Number Lines 2133-2139)

I was nervous. [Laughter] I was so nervous. [Laughter] I was nervous before [we] first started. I do not know. The video tape really really really does not bothers me, but it is the first time I have been on video camera—you know what I am saying? (Original Transcript Number Lines 2441-2468)

D.Will

D.Will was part of Cohort II. He graduated in 2007 and is presently (2011) working at a nursing home as host. He did attend The JKelly University briefly. He is single with no children. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Academic and Racial Descriptors

My name is D.Will. I graduated in 2007. I consider myself an African American male. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1-30)

I had Ms. Halasa for A.P. Biology in my junior year. [In] my senior year I took Chemistry. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 32-59)

Prior Perception to Enrolling in the Advanced Placement Biology Class

Before enrolling into A.P. Biology, I heard it . . . was a college-prep class. Therefore, I knew that it was going to be hard. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 77-84)

Who Influences and Challenges to Take Advanced Placement Biology Class?

I was influenced by Ms. Halasa to take the A.P. Biology class. I also wanted to further my education and I knew it would make me work toward my goals because it was a college prep class. I was planning on going to college once I graduated. I wanted to get a feel of what college was like starting now therefore when I get to college it won't be so brand new. I will already be familiar with college because of the A.P. class that I took. Ms. Halasa influenced me because she knew I was a hard worker and it's always good to try different and new things. She pushed me to do it, so I did it. Then my senior year I took Chemistry and nobody really influenced me to do that. I heard that Chemistry is easy. Plus it was a new teacher and I'm always up for new things. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 45-75)

My friends did influence me a little bit because I'm a people person. I love being around my friends and being around people. I enjoy going to the class. But it wasn't like I'm some follower. The class was fun to be in, even though the work was hard. You could never tell it was hard unless we told you because

every time you came into the class, there was always something to do, activities always going on and we were always smiling and laughing. Except when we were doing independent studies or when we were having tests. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 368-378)

The word Chemistry was not a fear for me in this process because it's science and, like I said before, science is a struggle for me. Chemistry was not necessarily easy and we still had to do work. However, this did not cross my mind because, just like before, I knew my friends were going to be in the class. Therefore, I'm going to join the class. But then when I got in the class with our new teacher she did not know anything about these students and we could get things over her. We did not do our own work and I believe it did not hurt us because she did not know.

Many things influenced me to enroll in my science courses. Ms. Halasa for example influenced me to go into her science course. Other teachers, friends, and learning also influenced me. If I wanted to learn about this type of science, then I'm going to take this type of class. If this teacher knows me and this teacher has a bond with me then I know that he or she is able to teach me. I can learn from her or him then I'm going to join the class. Or, you know, if my friends join the class then I'm interested in the class with them and—Bam!—we will be in the class together. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 461-483)

Perceptions of Pedagogy

A.P. Biology was more advanced and what you put into it is what you would get out of it. My previous high school science courses, it was always the teacher and basically the work was already mapped out, and it was just us raising hands, questions, answers, and we did it as a class. This one was more your own work at your own pace. Ms. Halasa did give us the materials and our notes. She taught us but it was up to us to get what we wanted out of the lessons or whatever she taught us. We then could put forth the effort into our A.P. test or our independent studies. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 122-136)

Every day we came into the course, it was work. We would come in, talk, play a little bit, but then after Ms. Halasa walked into the room we knew it was all strict work. We would bring out our notebook, textbook, and it was time to take notes.

Sometimes she would have quiet time for us to do our independent studies. She would give us time to catch up on our work because she knew that the class was hard and it was a struggle for the majority of the students in the class. She knew that the class was hard but it was a fair class. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 205-222)

We took practice tests at least twice a month, I believe. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 296-299)

The independent studies were basically you independently studying and getting the material on your own throughout the book and different stuff that was taught to you in previous science classes. The independent study allows you to study by yourself for the material and with the material. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 380-385)

Labs and Skits in the AP Biology

I recall the labs being performed in this course. The one that sticks out the most to me was the starfish. . . . None of my other science classes that I took let us do hands-on labs with actual creatures that are parts of the Earth. Our other science labs had to do with like water, salt, butter or posters. But this lab was actually hands-on with us taking, doing, and messing around with an object and we were writing down the information on datasheets. It was just a more hands-on experience and it made me look as if this is actually science. This is stuff that I really wanted to do. Now, I'm in an A.P. course and this is what it is. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 224-237)

Attitude Toward the Teacher and Teachers

To be honest the course was very hard. It was a very difficult type of course to take. But, throughout it all, we had a wonderful teacher. She was always there. She always cared. She just wanted us to ask questions. Sometimes we might argue or get into it. but, like I said before, she was always there. She was a hands-on teacher. She did have an assistant. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 347-357)

I know when a teacher is going to be able to teach me. For example, when I first was introduced to Ms. Halasa I just knew she was okay. She is a science freak because her room was full of all kinds of science stuff. She reminded me of the "magic school bus, Ms. Frizzle" [from the TV series The Magic School Bus], because she was always into science, and she always trying to feel out her students' interest. I guess basically what I am saying she just gets what life is about. She knew her science.

I knew Ms. Halasa could teach me because seeing her surroundings and other peers talking about her and how much she loves science. I knew that the class was going to be hard, but I knew stepping out with Ms. Halasa and being taught by her, I knew that the class would not be as hard. The work would be hard but I knew that Ms. Halasa knew what she was talking about. She was still going to school and trying to better her education, and at the same time she was willing to stay after school with us. She still knew how to make us understand material, the material was hard, and she would still try to break it down to the nitty-gritty for us to understand. I knew right then and there she was that teacher that can teach me and I was going to learn. If the teacher couldn't teach than how

were we suppose to learn? Ms. Halasa taught the class well and she knew how to teach.

A teacher should want to better their education, as well. If the teacher is still going to school then this teacher is cool. They are trying to further their studies and their ability to continue to want to learn while at the same time they want to teach us what they are being taught to help us learn.

Now my example of a teacher who can't teach is somebody who has no control over their class and who always tries to use the school material only. Instead they should try to further expand out on their own by grabbing other material into classroom. I do not think they should just stick to one curriculum that everybody else will say this teacher taught this way and, oh, she taught that way last year. I mean, if the teacher is trying to evolve then you know that the teacher can teach. If the teacher is not trying to evolve and continue[s] to do the same thing year after year after year on the same material at the same pace, on the same subject, at the same time, then you know this teacher is not trying to further his/her education. Therefore, at the same time how can she teach us to further our [education] if she is still doing the same thing year after year. A teacher can teach me who is willing to further their own personal education. A teacher is willing to teach new stuff and not stick with just the same routine every year after year.

I'm a people person and Ms. Halasa is a people person and because of that we clicked from day one without me not even taking a class from her. I would see Ms. Halasa in the hallways and we just would click. There are other teachers that I was taught by that I know we would just click. Some teachers who don't have a sense of humor or just stick right to the point cannot click with students. Some teachers do not have a personality, charisma or no character about themselves therefore it's going to make it hard for their student to want to learn. These teachers make us, the students, come in and sit down; make us write, or sit down and just make us look at the board. Or they just come in and don't even give enough free time and they go right to the point and they just start teaching. Teachers need to have a sense of humor or a personality in order to make the students want to continue to learn. We cannot just come into a room and as soon as the bell rings we just take out a book and start reading or start taking notes. However, when we were in Ms. Halasa's class we would come into her room, the bell would ring, we would have a couple minutes to talk, and then she would come in and we would get our books out but there were some jokes or we would talk about class and then we jump right into the material. I think if she was always strict then you would not have allowed us always let us raise our hand if we had questions, if we had jokes, it was all about fun. If the teachers who do not have a personality..., how can the student want to continue to learn or try to better themselves if the teachers are strict and quiet all the time? As I said before, the teachers' personality or charisma will have influence on the student's learning or what the student outcomes will be.

There were things that prevented me from interacting and learning in my chemistry class. I didn't think the teacher knew how to teach. I didn't think she knew the material and was just a weird teacher. The first time I met her I just

knew we were not going to learn anything in this class. She was not strict and we cheated by taking each others' papers and copying each others' answers. She never taught the class instead she would just follow the book and give some papers to read and the answers were in the book. When we have questions she did not know how to answer them. She didn't know the material so how could she teach somebody the material if she didn't know it. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 665-758)

Perception of May Advanced Placement Test

I recall [that] the May A.P. Exam was hard! The test itself was very hard. It was a nice quiet environment and all the students from that class were actually taking the test at the same time. The teacher was not in the room and every man for himself. The test was a bit of a struggle...

Everyday Ms. Halasa would tell us, "Take your notes because you never know if this material might be on the A.P. exam." She was right because everything we went over in the class was somewhat summed up inside of the A.P. exam. Throughout the whole course of the whole year she was warning us and letting us know [that] the test and the class [were] a struggle. However, what you put into it is what you are going to get out of it. Therefore, you need to come into the class and take your notes, listen, study up for your tests and exams then you will be alright. Throughout the whole year, this is exactly what she did. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 239-258)

I remember my AP Biology test score was low. To be honest, I really didn't put forth effort needed to study for this test or really care about this test. I was okay with this because it was an A.P. class and I was earning C's in it. Either way it's like I'm losing on the test but I'm still winning because I'm getting a C and passing the class. I felt taking the AP exam is not a big percentage of our grade and whatever we got on it could only benefited us. . . . Ms. Halasa did talk about the benefits of the AP exam at one point. We took practice tests at least two a month. . . . If we got a magnificent grade on it then we would get credit for college and that was an incentive. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 260-303)

Grades in the AP Biology Class and Other Science Courses

The AP Biology class is a college prep course. It has a different grading scale that was harder than the other high schools science classes. It was more of a college grading scale. I knew the class was going to be hard and the grading scale 100% to a 93% is an A. We are use to getting 92% still be an A, but right here it's a B.

I knew that the class would be a lot harder. However, everything we did in the class is what made up the percent of our final grade. Tests and quizzes were 30% and labs that we did were 30%. . . . So, if you don't do your work or

didn't care to do your labs then you knew you were going to fail the course. Therefore, the grade reflected what you did.

I earned a C in A.P. Biology both semesters. That was hard! [Laughter] I always thought that if it was on the true high school grading scale and not a college prep grading scale then this C would be a B. I got a C but in reality I really got a B and as long as I didn't get D or F.

When looking at my previous grades, I earned A's and B's literally across the board in so many courses. When you get down to my junior year of high school, Algebra II/Trig, A.P. Biology and A.P. European History there is a little bit of struggle. I ended up with some C's and even trouble in European History.

I just thought I should have worked harder. Every time I thought I was working harder, I still got a C. I just put forth my effort and I was alright with the grade. Just like I said before, the C was really a B. If it was the true high school grading scale and not the college prep grading scale, then I always thought that I still got a C but deep down inside it's was a B to me. I figured I was still doing well. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 138-203)

Grades to me mean . . . you are earning money from working. If you come to work and they pay you on your performance, you make \$10.00 an hour if you make an A performance, but you make \$5.00 an hour then it is for an F performance. When I was getting A's, B's and C's, to me that was like okay and that is the \$10.00 because you know I put forth my work ethics and was working. However, it is when you get F's and D's that means that you basically wasn't trying or putting forth your effort. Like I mentioned before, grades mean money because if you want money so bad you know how to work for it and go out and get it. Therefore, you make yourself better or make yourself feel good about yourself because you are making money and that's what grades mean to me... (Original Transcript Line Numbers 619-663)

Attitude Toward Life

Today's world a lot of people don't want to go to school, let alone college and it's like all just mess[ed] up because without an education you basically have no life. I mean what do you do after high school? You can't get nowhere without a high school diploma. However, a high school diploma alone you can't still make the type of money that you want unless you better your education and get you some degrees in the fields that you want to do. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 859-875)

I work at MEERS Grocery Store and it kills me to know I just want money. I love making it and I love spending it. I know for the rest of my life I don't want to be at MEERS, ringing up or bagging groceries. I want to better my education. Therefore, I can better the dividends that will be in my pocket. After

earning your high school diploma, it is always better to at least try college or want to go to college just to better yourself because you can never learn too much.

I do not define success [only] by monetary issues. Success to me is when you are successful in your right state of mind or you can be successful with cash and just with learning— period. Life is a learning experience...If you better your education then it pays off when you get the job you want. Therefore, you need to go after the materials to learn what you need from your education.

My number one priority right now is to return back to school. I need to get my license, my own car and try to get everything on my own without asking people. I don't like asking people for stuff unless I really really need to and it kills me to ask. It does not hurt to ask because at the same point in time they can only say two things, "yes" or "no." But I'm the type of person who will try to get it on my own first. If I can't get it on my own, then I swallow my pride. I never hesitate to ask because you have friends, family and everybody is here to help one another. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 905-931)

Applying to school later makes me feel now like this is my chance. I am D. Will and... I'm tired of working every day. I love being around people and I just want to learn. I just want to better myself... [and] my education, and get myself together. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1331-1336)

I refuse to just constantly sit at home every day. My main thing right now is to enroll in school and classes again. I need to schedule for my license and get a car. [But] I am also a procrastinator and it is not necessarily studying the book. . . I just need to finish practicing my reverse. Nobody wants to show me how to reverse or allow me to take their car. As I said before, I hate begging people. However, anytime anybody asked me for anything, if I got it then they can have it. It's hard for me because I always don't know how to say "no." I think the reason I am this way is [that] I never had anything growing up. I just feel like just being nice will pay off always and the golden rule is to treat others the way you want to be treated. [Conversely] I want others to help me when I need something. I know it's not always the same person who helps you. Sometimes you give and it might be somebody else that comes in and helps you. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1362-1388)

How One Views Studying

The work was hard, and it was just constant work, work and work. I took A.P. European History and I took A.P. Biology. It was more work and study than the regular classes in high school and it was a bit of a challenge for me. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 86-93)

In order to enroll in the A.P. classes, I do not believe it should be requirement to have certain grades. Instead the person should have good work

ethics. . . . If you don't have good work ethic then you will be lost: you will not be willing to do the work, turn in your work on time, you wouldn't raise your hand to ask questions and you wouldn't take your notes. . . . A good work ethic is necessary for the A.P. class. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 422-436)

My first semester at the University [in 2007], I enrolled into a class as early as 7:45 in the morning. However, I like to party in the evening. I would be late to the class and it was the type of class that after so many times you might as well quit coming because you would be docked. You can be an A student in the class but just because of your attendance you will not even pass the class, and that's what happened to me. I wasn't flunking the tests and I was getting A's on my papers— Boom! Boom! Boom!

It was my basic math class that was time consuming. You got to be there at 7:45 right on the dot, and I didn't have car. Sometimes I would miss the bus and then I would have to walk and it just was too much, so I just gave up on it. The second time around I decided to pick the math class in the afternoon at 1:10. However, my friend Rayiana came home and we began to smoke and drink and I just felt school was not my priority. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1305-1329)

I remember Ms. Halasa had an assistant [who] was helping us. Plus, it was a fun class because my best friend was in there. In fact, I had a couple of friends in there and my sister was in the class. I was always surrounded by people I liked. We had some pretty good memories in the class. Even though a lot of us didn't pass the test or get a good grade on the test, overall it was a good class. It taught us a lot. It let us know if you're planning on going to college or if you are planning on wanting to be somebody you have to work toward everything because in life there's nothing that's going to be handed to you if you don't work toward it. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 359-366)

I mentioned before this course did prepare me for college. Reflecting back, this course helped me for my first year of college. Both the A.P. Biology and A.P. European [History] came in hand-in-hand with me because the courses were constant work of taking notes, asking questions and raising your hand. I was not scared to talk to my professor or teacher because of the experience in these classes. When I got to college and I started to take the courses, [and] I began to reflect back on those A.P. classes. . . . I really believe that these classes did prepare us for college. At least it did prepare me personally for college because of the type of work we always had in college. Nothing in college is handed to you. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 387-407)

[A.P. Biology] was very hard and I [had] never been in a class where it was more on you and less on teacher. It was more of what we put on the table is what we were getting out of the class. Ms. Halasa taught us how to be more independent and quit depending on her because the class was teaching us to get

ready for college. The class also showed us different views of science, the origin of science and how it all came about. I never witnessed that through any other of my high school Science classes. I [began to care] about different aspects of science.

She was a wonderful teacher. What she said and how she taught us was exactly what was on the test. She did not lie to us. What she told me about the course ahead of time and how it can prepare you for college was actually true! The work we did was just like work you would have when you go to college. Work! She made it safe for us to ask questions. When I got to college and I had questions to ask, I was ok with raising my hand to ask. Throughout the whole course it was hard and challenging but I overcame the challenge. If you are not into science then do not take it. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Line Numbers 484-517)

Advice to Other Students

Seriously, if I were to give advice to another student about school science then I would tell them to learn as much as you can and always try to be hands-on with the different materials in science class. If you are confused about something, then always raise your hand and ask because that is why teachers are there. Science is really a difficult type of subject to learn but that can be with everything. If you are struggling with anything in science, then ask the teachers who are there to help you. There is lots of material out here to help you such as the Internet. Do not think just because you are in a science class and it is hard that you should just give up. You should not! As I said before, there is always help out there. We are living with science every day. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 320-332)

I would advise different[ly to] different people. But, the ones that you see with the good work ethic, the ones that are go-getters and strivers for excellence or want to learn more, I would advise them to take the class. But if you have somebody that's in Science, not necessarily saying they're failing, but F's or D's or C's, but somebody that just don't have interest in Science but has to take a Science class in order to graduate, I wouldn't recommend a A.P. Science class to them. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 409-420)

Student's Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

How do I know that I really learned something? After taking the A.P. Biology class, I was able to answer science test questions or was familiar with the material or whatever the information is being talked about in the new science class because the information seems to come back into my mind. ... I do not struggle with the answers or materials being taught.

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: ...learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

After reading the above statements, my thoughts are closer to Betty Gardner. I believe hands on My definition of the word “learning” to me in my own words is beginning to understand the material, understand thoughts, and understand the different data or different aspects of what is being taught to you. You learned something by being taught something then you get it, you suck it in, you use it, you know it well to your advantage and to better your education. At least that is what I think it is. I also liked the statement she said that if they have no changes in some way of gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, inquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. Basically she is saying if the students do not taken in the material and better understanding the material then hands on then they are not learning something. It is just like opening game and pulling out all the pieces and just playing with the without reading the instruction to know how to play the game.

The more that you put out trying to learn the material then the more you will know what you learned about the material. The more work you put out, you will get a better understanding in your head and in your mind. You can better your education with the material that was taught therefore you learned.

[By] “put out” [I mean] your work ethics such as the way you are studying, reading the material or asking questions. The more that you put yourself out there to learn the material then the more you want the material to be taught to you. The better you learn the material then the better [your] understanding. The better your education and the further on you will be with your studies.

[However] my learning experience is to learn the material and always try to find the easy way out. I do not like to study too much. Therefore, as long as I learn the basics then I know it will be on a test. If I know the class is not hard then I know I can just get in and learn the material. Boom! I will take the test, ace the test and its okay. The A.P. Biology class was harder. I am saying to myself, well, this class was harder and it is time for learning. I need to study harder by putting [in] more of an effort. I should not always try to look for the easy out; you know the scapegoat, or the easy route knowing that this class is hard. A class is easy then you’ll try to take the easy way out. I thought the class was hard; therefore, I had to study harder basically saying more time, more questions, more answers, staying over late and trying to learn the material. That’s what I mean by harder, harder makes a good student. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 519-611)

Attitude Toward Scientists or Science

I remember this A.P. Biology book. . . . This class was not like the other science classes that I took in high school. There was more data and procedures. The AP Biology class was just more Science added than the other science classes that I [had] previously [taken].

Science means to me . . . your DNA, your genetics, just what we live in. Our world is Science. It is . . . the environment and nature. I just think science is the way of living our lives. So, we are Science. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 95-116)

[W]e are living science. . . . Science to me is life. . . . Science is happening in the world with nature or animals. The science that we took in the A.P. course started with Darwin and his theory of evolution then DNA and genetics. That’s all going around today in our society and life with genetics or evolution. So, like I said, Science is all in the world. How can you skip something that you are living? But, [personally] I have no interest in Science. I wouldn’t be a science teacher. I would take a science class in college because that is the criteria that you have to take but I am not interested science. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 305-318)

Career and/or College Experiences

Well, when I return to the university in August, I will be studying fashion merchandising. I picked fashion merchandising because I have interest in fashion

and the entertainment business. I know fashion. Fashion changes every day. Different fashions are brought about to the world. To me, fashion is like [the] seasons because they change. Fashion is like a human being because they change. So, that is why I chose it. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 333-345)

I am attending University of JKelly versus Revert because it is cheaper and JKelly University is right around the corner from where I live. I try not to listen to the statistics either because I know a lot of people say, well, you should go to Revert. I mean I don't want to be a follower. I'm a leader because I know Akron's offering it, [and] there is some good to the program. I know some people [who] went there. They are still doing the same thing, making the same amount of money in the same field. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 944-956)

Race

The prompt:

Historically being an African-American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

I'm not really feeling the raft of you know being on the unemployment rate or not going to school, not bettering education. It is not hitting me yet. Like I feel like everybody is still equal. I know gas prices still raging and sometimes it's hard to maintain a household with the economy slowly declining and not being able to pick up on time. I'm not really feeling it. . . . [I'm] twenty years old. I have a job and [I am going to] school.

Just because I am African-American male, I have never experienced any kind of negative issues in my education or in my social life. I've had my job for three years. I graduated high school. [I'm] attending college. It is okay right now for me. The majority of males in my family don't attend school or don't have jobs.

It was their choice. The economy is slow, but at the same point in time how do you know that the economy is slow if you're not willing to try the economy. You are not out here trying to get a job . You are not out here trying to go to school. How can [you] tell me anything if you're not trying or even dealing with it? Their upbringing causes them to try to live the fast life and not understand . . . education [God] . . . [those] what's important right now. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 760-811)

I never felt any teacher was prejudice at high school or racial—nothing. Now, at my job for like the last few months I've been feeling like they've just been picking on the young African-American kids [rather] than the young Caucasian kids, but I really don't feel different. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 984-1163)

Friends

I was forced into [going to college] my first year and I was not really ready... Other people did influence me. A couple friends [said,] "D. Will come to school. Go to school! Now, I was just saying to myself it would have just been better to have waited six months after graduating high school and then jump into the spring semester of 08. I would have been okay instead of just jumping right into college after I graduated high school. I wanted to experience fun and take care of education. Instead, I just put my education on the backburner and did all the fun and then consequences came after that so... (Original Transcript Line Numbers 813-840)

As for applying to school later, I feel now like this is my chance. Like this is me, and as I said before I'm tired of working every day. I love being around people and I just want to learn, I just want to better myself, better my education and get me together. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1334-1336)

Family

Out of all five of my mom's children I am the first to go to college. It makes me feel good, at the same time it brings me down a lot because I see out of five of us, I'm the baby boy, and I got two older brothers and they're not doing anything. I have an older sister who works a job at McDonald's, but she wants to go to school, but at the same point in time school is not for her at this point in time. I want her to go and to better her education but she wants to make money. I know working at McDonald's is not going to get her there. I mean the only way I know is to try to get an education to better my life. Therefore, I can make the money that I want to make. But right now she's not ready.

I am moving forward and other people in my family are not moving because of their upbringing and them trying to live the fast life and not understanding education and God is [or] what's important right now.

My mom didn't go to college. My father did go to college while he was incarcerated. He took some courses in jail [and] has an associate degree. I'm not sure if any of his siblings went to college. [W]e never met my dad. . . . I talked to him every now and then [and we sometimes communicated] through writing. I don't ever really ask him too many questions about his life. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 806-857)

Four out of my five of siblings graduated high school. I was raised by my aunt not knowing what it feels like to have a mother or father who pushes you and make[s] you go to school, or tries to help [you] better your education and that's what stuck out to me the most. My main motivation was I knew that my mom dropped out in the sixth grade and I still never met my dad but he graduated high school. He graduated from the same high school I did and took some courses for

college. At that same point in time, my uncles didn't graduate and my aunt who raised me dropped out in the 10th grade. It was like okay they didn't have [any] motivation. Therefore, I made them my motivation.

[T]hey could not do it therefore I know I can and this stuck in my mind. I can get a high school diploma and a lot of jobs even little jobs such as working at a gas station, or working at MEERS, or working at McDonald's. You need to have a job. Nowadays, if you don't have a high school diploma or not going to school they do not have a job to offer you. I just knew when my mom and others did not achieve then I [had] to do it. I want to be a millionaire, I want to be successful and I know without an education I can't do that. But I know with that education it will pay off with the money that we want. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 877-903)

Honestly my environment and my family were not the right resources around me to support me because if they did, I would still be rolling in school. The household I was staying in was always rowdy, no computer. I mean you need a computer this day and age. I was moving too fast but now I have a taste of college. I'm glad that I have a second chance to be able to come back to college. Everything was just a learning experience. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 933-942)

I still need to be with my family because I need [them]too. I know Revert itself is not that far away but I still feel that it is further away from my comfort zone. As of right now, I don't want to live too fast of a life. I was living the fast life because I had to hurry-up and grow up by learning the basics of life to survive. I do not feel that I was robbed from my childhood to a grownup because everybody moves at their own pace.

I felt like the situation of knowing that my mom being on drugs, not having a father figure and being raised by my aunt, I knew I had to grow up. When I got into high school and I seen stuff turning for the worst. My aunt began to start drugs again and I just told myself if you want to make it in this world you have to start teaching yourself. My aunt just gave up on us because she turned to drugs, bills were being cut off, no money and we had no one to ask for anything. I just felt like okay it is time for you to get on your own now and you [will] have no more handouts.

I do not think of family as a handout. I felt they were a blessing. My Aunt did not have to take [me and my older sister Stacey] in . . . I could have went to someone else but my aunt. My cousin ReaRea took Ishesia, my younger sister, and then my cousin that I live with now took my brother. My older brother moved to California and has lived there for the last four years. He has a son, a daughter and lives with his girlfriend. I'm trying to see him in December.

All my siblings never been under the same roof at the same time. I'm the type of person [who] wears my heart on my sleeve. I have a feeling that my older brothers and sisters do not care if we are all close or together.

Ishesia is a year younger than [me], but I feel like we really care for our mom. We have no animosity, like my older brother he is dogging on me. Stacey really has no love toward our mom. I just feel different. I was just talking to my cousin's homemaker yesterday, she told me never to give up on your mom. The biggest thing that happened in my life is not necessarily being raised by my mom or my dad, but it's just how I just gave it to God like years ago. I swear I gave it to God and totally forgot about it, and it's just like everything has worked okay since then. I have yet to hear any bad news about my mom such as your mom got hold of some bad stuff or your mom about to get shot or your mom was dying because she overdosed I never heard such things, once I gave it to God. I do not even worry anymore. So basically I gave it to God and that allowed me to grow.

I moved out [of the house] on May 6, 2008 [into another home]. Everybody was happy to see me go to college because I think I was the only young cousin or nephew that is actually enrolled in college. Nobody else in my family knows what they want to do with their li[ves]. They have no get up and go. I mean I'm the only one. Like I said I'm tired of working at MEERS to tell you the truth, but I know that it is a job. It is something that I need in order to keep my income rolling in. [Also, it's] because I do not like to ask nobody else for cash. . . I refuse to do so. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 1164-1286)

Roy

Roy was part of Cohort II. He graduated in 2007. He presently is attending (2011) The George State University and is majoring in Comparative Ethnic Studies and minor in Sexualities study. He is a single gay man with no children. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Academic and Racial Descriptors

My name is Roy. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1-40)

I considered my[self] of African-American descent. (Original Transcript Number Lines 42-45)

My junior year I took A.P. Biology. My senior year I took A.P. Chemistry. (Original Transcript Number Lines 47-58)

My senior year I also took Human Biology in Ms. Witt's class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 88-89)

Prior Perception to Enrolling in the Advanced

Previously before enrolling into A.P. Biology, I heard it was hard because it was a lot of work. I heard it from people who weren't [believable]. I wouldn't listen. I took it anyway. . . . No one ever told me that it would help me with anything. I just figured it would... (Original Transcript Number Lines 65-84)

I [knew] all Advanced Placement classes [were] college classes. (Original Transcript Number Lines 741-744)

Influences to Take Advanced Placement Biology Class

I was influenced to take both classes because I liked Biology and I thought Chemistry would help me with college. So, I took it. [Laughter] Chemistry wasn't really that big of a help in college but Biology was. (Original Transcript Number Lines 60-62)

Perceptions of Pedagogy

I remember in the course that I first learned how to say the scientific name for a slug. Then I forgot it. I know it's not pseudoma, it's like... (Original Transcript Number Lines 107-108)

I remember doing the vocabulary and the take-home tests. [My friend] Sophie and I would begin on the phone, talking about the tests and trying to knock it out. I remember it was difficult. . . . I remember this class being fast-paced. But now that I'm looking at the syllabus it doesn't seem that fast. Maybe at the time it seemed like it was pretty fast because other classes weren't moving as fast as this one was. But college is a lot quicker.

[A]t the time, I felt pressured time-wise. A little bit. And then, I don't know why? Well, if I had the class now, I would actually be able to study. (Original Transcript Number Lines 129-155)

I didn't really like the structure of the class when I was actually in the class. I remember, I thought it was a little too unorganized for my taste, but I'm not quite sure. I think . . . that, the most confusing [were] the due dates [for our assignments]. It just would confuse me . . . but the material [wasn't] hard to grasp. (Original Transcript Number Lines 195-218)

The organization really got to me. I don't know. Actually, looking at the agenda it was kind of well-planned out. I can't remember if the teacher went along with the syllabus verbatim. Maybe if the teacher didn't go along with the syllabus? Maybe, I will ask her. (Original Transcript Number Lines 549-573)

I don't know? I moved on to another topic. I don't remember having a test over every chapter. I guess we did since it's in the syllabus after every chapter. Then we had independent studies. Were the tests all take home? I did take tests in the class itself, that's what I thought. There is a lot of material to cram in by the time May came rolling through. (Original Transcript Number Lines 632-655)

Perceptions of Labs and Skits

The labs were cool. We actually got to dissect a frog and a starfish. I remember we saw the inside of a starfish, and it was actually their intestines and stuff. We thought it was all poop, so we sat there and scraped out everything. It turned out that it was actually their intestines.

I remember the smell of formaldehyde was extra whack. I remember when I took my senior year Human Biology Class. Mrs. Witt went to a slaughter house and got us stuff. We didn't have to smell the formaldehyde. I was extra relieved. (Original Transcript Number Lines 239-252)

Perceptions of Ms. Halasa and Other Teacher(s)

I think [Laughter]. I'm not sure. I think it was the teacher [A.P. Biology Teacher – Ms. Halasa] but I could be wrong, I could have just been me not applying myself appropriately. When I look back now, I probably should have done more for the class and not actually point the finger as much. At the time when I was taking the class, I was kinda pointing the finger at the teacher... (Original Transcript Number Lines 221-237)

I think being an unbalanced person kinda clashes a little bit—doesn't work—just because I'm unorganized myself. My teacher did have a lot of clutter. Her office was atrocious. Uh, this is so awkward! But, this is about honesty. (Original Transcript Number Lines 314-352)

The teacher that taught the class was really helpful in facilitating us in what we needed to do and helping us in certain directions. I guess I want to say is we had our thing. I don't know. She was just a real stickler about due dates, kind of.

It wasn't the due dates that bothered me, it was just that I thought it was a little unorganized. I can't remember why I [thought this] at the time, but I can't remember why.... (Original Transcript Number Lines 402-419)

At North High School, not all of the teachers made you do as much work as they might need you to do or you should have to do. I guess when they got to the A.P. Biology class, they [the students] were just like, "Damn." [Laughter]

“Like, I actually have to work.” They often expressed [this sentiment] and it affected me! (Original Transcript Number Lines 512-527)

[W]e had a student teacher, Mrs. Raider... [who] was cool. I don't remember if she taught us. She didn't teach us. She was just there for help. Never mind! I think that could be frustrating.

Ms. Halasa helped us a lot actually. I remember at the end of the class. I was in her office doing makeup stuff. I was frantically doing papers at the end of things so I could turn them in for my grade. I can't say that she didn't help. And maybe, I should have applied myself more at the time. We had study groups before tests. We would come and stay for like hours and hours studying before our tests. (Original Transcript Number Lines 549-609)

When teacher was teaching the class, I don't remember her stressing the transition level that this class is really applicable to college. . . . [O]bviously, it wasn't ingrained into my head because I don't even remember it happening. (Original Transcript Number Lines 657-660)

I remember all A.P. classes were like a college class. I remember knowing that. . . . When I got to Chemistry my freshman year [at Ohio State], I remember I looked at the stuff and [said] I don't remember this material. When we started doing it, I was like, “Oh yeah, we did do this.” As opposed to when I took my Biology class and I was in lecture, [I thought] “Ah, I remember this,” and it was like, right after I did it. In Chemistry, I actually had do it and then I was “Oh, yeah.” So, it was a different remembrance type because I didn't actually do as much work in A.P. Chemistry.

The teacher was not all together. She was organized, I guess, because she knew what she was doing. . . . It was just different from high school. (Original Transcript Number Lines 739-772)

Here's my problem, Chemistry kicked my butt when I first started at Ohio State because when I was in Chemistry I played it as a joke. But Biology wasn't as hard because when I was in Biology class, our teacher actually made us do our work. I had to learn, so the transition was a little better.

I did have a conflict with my Biology teacher, we had different styles. I prefer more organized methods. College is organized. It's a lot more organized than high school, in general. I don't know, I'm just an organized type. I'm not organized myself so I like the person that I'm dealing with to be organized, so it balances out. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Perception of Classmates

I think that's another reason I had pessimistic view towards [A.P. Biology]... [T]he majority of [the] class view of the class was difficult and [my

classmates were] extra pissed-off. . . . They were just like, “Damn.” [Laughter] “Like, I actually have to work.” It affected me. . . . [but] I had people [around me] who kept me grounded, like Sophie.

There were [also] a few people who just weren’t interested in Biology and I was wondering why they took the class in the first place. I thought maybe they thought that this is North High School and they get an A.P. credit easily. I am sure they could of done the work. Then there [were] other people who were just disturbed by the workload. . . . I don’t think I was affected by the workload as much as I was the organization. (Original Transcript Number Lines 504-547)

Perception of May Advanced Placement Test

I remember my A.P. exam being difficult. “What the . . .?” I think I did okay. The career path that I’m going towards, I don’t have to take 101. I did not have to take it!! I got a three on my Biology. I got three out of five which wasn’t bad, I guess. Ohio State a three only gets you credit for a 101 class. In my career path, I needed like a four or a five to skip over the classes that I needed to skip, which was higher-level biology. I think if I would have studied and applied myself, then I could have got a better grade.

I have that problem now. I know what I need to do, but I’m not doing it, kind of. Read the material and do the extra work that’s needed. I do what I think I need to do instead of what I know I need to do. You know what I’m saying? (Original Transcript Number Lines 254-278)

What’s the May test? By the time they did those questions where it was like “A smell is to a rock as a leaf is to a tree,” and we had to figure out the correct [answer]. I thought the comparison . . . were hard on the test. I’ve never seen the answers to the A.P. test. I thought those questions were a waste of time. I think the majority of the class thought it was difficult. (Original Transcript Number Lines 475-500)

I should have taken all the A.P. tests. I did not take the A.P. test for Chemistry. I just knew I wasn’t gonna get anything off of it because I wasn’t confident in the course at all. I didn’t take it. I don’t remember my A.P. Biology teacher making us take the A.P. May test but I do remember taking it.

A.P. Chemistry class teacher did not mention the A.P. Chemistry May exam. I just knew I wasn’t going to take it, so I didn’t. . . . My A.P. History class took it as well, but I don’t remember what I got. (Original Transcript Number Lines 774-791)

Link Between Science Grades and Effort

I see this is what I earned in A.P. Biology. I had a B my first quarter and a C the second one. First half, well technically that's good for an A.P. course, I guess. I usually don't get C's. I remember thinking to myself that I didn't apply [myself] as hard as I could have. I could have done more, studied more than I did at the time. . . . I was not satisfied [with a C]. (Original Transcript Number Lines 162-193)

When I was in high school, I think what motivated me is having something at the end of the year. Especially in middle school, we got an award. I would say that I have to get this. I have to achieve toward short goals but at college you don't. You would get the grade, you move on, you don't get the grades you move on! You know what I'm saying. It's hard for me to have the drive for four years and go with the school progress. I should be having satisfaction. Hey that's A!

Just need to get done! I do not look at grades, like man, I got a C or, man, I got an A. I just like to pass and need this to get where I need to be... I am weird. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1060-1073)

Attitude

Being efficient in chemistry in college you need to be aroused, not necessarily passionate or love it. . . . I'm not dumb. I'm a quick learner. I don't think anyone's actually super smart. I can do a lot better than what I'm doing. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1029-1059)

[S]ometimes there are limitations that are imposed by me or maybe by the environment . . . I feel like I have pretty good potential. I think sometimes I can get in the way I guess. Things change, people change . . . (Original Transcript Number Lines 1269-1287)

Study

I remember thinking to myself that I didn't apply as hard as I could have [in high school]. I could have done more, studied more than I did at the time. I couldn't tell you that I was satisfied with a C. I was not satisfied. (Original Transcript Number Lines 183-193)

Sophie was my partner that I worked with all the time... sometimes [with] Cupid, once with Natasha. It was just me and Sophie, I'm pretty sure. [T]he take-home tests were really helpful, as well. You actually had to search to look-up everything. But I think, again, the take-home tests would have been easier if I

had read the material before the test. I don't know, there are a lot of things that I would go back and change if I had the opportunity.

Couple of things I would change. I would read the material, obviously, in detail. I would just pay attention more, study more, and a lot of things that I didn't do that I probably could have done to better myself in the class. ...I think I just have a different outlook now. I matured a little, you know. (Original Transcript Number Lines 679-708)

I think Ms. Halasa should have given me the book [textbook] because you should let people have the book. I think that I did keep my notes [notebook of material]. I should look when I go home... (Original Transcript Number Lines 795-809)

Studying harder means not waiting until the last day to actually do my test or study—do it in daylight, not at midnight. . . . I guess I could have spread the workload out. I think studying better [and] working harder... than I would have done better—Took bites and instead [of] all at once.

The materials were more familiar in college in my biology course than in my chemistry course because the demand to learn it was higher in my biology high school course. However, I did not apply myself fully. Now, I don't know [why] I was trying to think about this and why I am not doing all A level. I should be doing A level instead of getting B or C. . .

I think it's a lot of time management because I'm big procrastinator and I need to get rid of that demon. Because procrastination is the devil—hahaha! (Original Transcript Number Lines 994-1027)

How Advanced Biology Course Helped

If we had this interview before my biology class [in high school] I would be able to tell you verbatim what I remember from just this class. [W]hen I was taking my Bio113 in Ohio State University, a lot of the things were really familiar to me. I was like, "Oh yea, I remember this from high school." I took this in my 11th grade year, and this is my sophomore year in college, and I still remembered it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 112-127)

Biology isn't a hard concept to grasp. (Original Transcript Number Line 220)

Yes, this [A.P. Biology] class actually helped me without the teacher physically saying, "This is setting you up for the next stage." I told you when I got to my Biology class and I was already going through our material in college. I was like, "Oh, I know this already, cause I did it in high school." And I got a B

in the class, and I think I should have gotten an A. I remember looking over the material and like, “Oh, yeah. That transcription”

Transcription! I remember all of that stuff. I remember doing Punnett squares. When everyone was learning how to do Punnett squares [in college], I already knew how to do them. I don’t know it was really easy for me because I had taken it before. The other people were all, “Oh, this is the first time I ever did it,” and I was, “Nope.” Even though, I think I should have studied more for my A.P. test. I skipped Biology 101 which is not the science needed for my major instead I needed to Biology 113. (Original Transcript Number Lines 707-733)

Getting and Giving Advice

[I]f you’re planning on doing something, especially if it’s science-related in college, you should really apply yourself in those [high school] classes and learn as much as you can. . . . If you learn more in high school, then your transition to college will be a lot easier.

Here’s my problem, Chemistry kicked my butt when I first started at Ohio State because when I was in Chemistry I played it as a joke in high school. But Biology wasn’t as hard because when I was Biology class, our teacher actually made us do our work. So, I had to learn, so, the transition was a little better. (Original Transcript Number Lines 300-317)

I would advise other people to take this course [A.P. Biology] because I think that I really benefited from the class, despite what I was thinking at the time I took the class. (Original Transcript Number Lines 397-400)

Student’s Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: . . .learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge

dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

I might agree with Betty Gardner's definition of learning. I would say I'm a dumb person but I'm a quick learner. I think that learning is taking information that was given to you to different circumstances and situations in your life and [applying it] to your life. I think that learning transforms the mind. If you didn't learn or you were unable to learn than you will always stay the same person. I am learning person because I am constantly changing. I need to use definition of learning as taking experience to life. I don't think that they always have to be scholastic. I think the experiences that you go through in life and the people you meet and their ideas incorporate into your psyche [and make you] a better person.

I define a better person if you want to better yourself for yourself. I don't think that you would say that you're a better person to me and then say it to somebody else. I think you'd learn to be yourself.

Basically my definition of learning would be that I would take it in and make changes the way I think in my psyche. I should have worked harder. It's all on me. I have the information that concerned me and I didn't apply it to my everyday life like I should have. (Original Transcript Number Lines 915-995)

Career College

I love Biology! After I left the class [A.P. Biology], I decided I was going to major in Biology when I went to college. I'm majoring in it now. This is my second year at Ohio State. (Original Transcript Number Lines 280-298)

My major is Biology. I've been looking at a minor in Human Sexuality, but I haven't decided yet. I'm a Pre-Med, hopefully. I've actually wanted to be a doctor since I was five years old. I think maybe when I was little somebody mentioned like, "You're gonna be a doctor when you get older" and "I was like yeah be a doctor." Then when I got older and got old enough to investigate, I found it very interesting. I decided I wanted to be a surgeon since eighth grade. I always watched the shows on TV. It was pretty cool. I used to watch ER, the Critical Hour and some other shows on the Discovery Health Channel. I would think this is something I would really like to do. I decided I wanted to be a

surgeon since eighth grade. Then I came here [Ohio State University]. I was really in awe at the surgery process in emergency rooms. I want[ed] to work in an emergency room and deal with that kind of stuff. (Original Transcript Number Lines 356-389)

But now, for some reason, I just don't have the drive. I don't know yet! I've had that moment experiencing. I had it before this is what I want to do. Now, I am in college and I haven't stumbled upon on my God; I'm really passionate about this. I really care about people. I give blood every 3 months. I volunteer at a blood bank, I mean American Red Cross. I enjoy the diversity groups and all that jazz. I care to help people and maybe that's another reason why I wanted to go into medicine. I'll still probably go into medicine because that's what's interesting but I don't know if I want to... I don't know. The caring for people is important to me. The only science I really like is biology. I like the human body and I am [curious]. I like the human body [but] I don't think I just love science and that's all.

I did the Health Care In-Progress (HIP) in middle school. Then my senior year in high school, I was in Junior Leadership of Akron and went to hospital [But] I want life and I do not want to be on call all time I discovered that I don't want that. A lot of doctors don't have my personality. I talked to few doctors. I would not say a lot. I don't know, I want to be free.

I don't know what motivates me besides helping people. I think this is why I'm having issues. I don't know if I want to be a doctor in the first place besides helping people without being a doctor. I don't care about how much a doctor makes because I just want to be happy. You know I just want to enjoy life and live life with the people that make me happy. I think the people in my life are more important than stuff or the status... [N]obody really cares if I'm a doctor. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1078-1146)

Comments About Race and Ethnicity

The prompt:

Historically being an African-American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

Historically, being an African-American male has been a source of limitations in the U.S. At school I'm involved with a bunch of Black groups. I guess it's like well we can't do anything because you're a White man holding us down. I don't believe that! I think people were following me around the store. They looked suspicious. You know what I'm saying? No one ever follows me around the store. I don't feel like I'm ever discriminated against personally. A lot of people feel this but I've never experienced it. However, I did the other day at Taco Bell.

I thought it was racist. I have been going over to Taco Bell since I have been working at T.J. Maxx. I went to Taco Bell. They got these little flag things that they be hanging everywhere. I thought what these things are but I did not ask. Ordered my food, I sat down and a White lady comes behind me. She ordered her food. He [Clerk behind the desk] said “Would you like to donate a dollar to this charity?” I don’t know the name of the charity? I wonder why you didn’t ask me? Maybe he thought I did not want to. I thought if I came in the next week maybe he will ask me. But he never asks me. Yet, he asks everybody else.

I don’t know because if he did not ask me because I am an African-American male or because I am young. It could be because I’m young or maybe it’s cause I don’t wanna just say because I’m Black. It’s like maybe he thought I would not give. I love giving to charity. You know what I’m saying. Why aren’t you asking me?

He was a White guy and he is a weirdo. He works at Taco Bell. Lots of people experience blatant racism, but it’s never happened to me. I do believe it’s still pretty prominent? I think so. I think people may be racist. I don’t know. I cannot speak of it. I did not experience it.

Well, I live with my Grandmother. She’s gonna to be 82 years old. My Grandmother is not big on speaking of any experiences in her life dealing with racism in any way. She’s weird. She likes to displays different things than what she is. She’s not a big profound person. She’s not a person who says “in my day” or anything like that. She just goes from now. I’ve never heard stories about incidents. I’ve never heard any stories that of 1930’s. I never heard her stories of the past instead she tells about present. She has White friends. She talks to White people. She’s on the board of the Housing Urban Development (HUD) program. She doesn’t have any problems with White people. One time, I was going to church with Sophie when I was in high school. My grandma said, “Be careful them White people are going to kill you.” But other than that, she’s not really said anything else. I lied. [Laughter] She laughed and thought it was a joke. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1291-1366)

Influence in My Life

My Grandmother did. I do not think anyone else influences [me] from my family. Maybe people influence me in my regular day life. I do not think anyone was detrimental ... (Original Transcript Number Lines 1583-1588)

Friends

I am the first to go to college in my immediate kind of family. Having my best friend as a roommate in college it’s cool. We were in the same major and I thought we would take more time together. Like sit down and study more. I

would say, “Hey Cupid let’s study together.” He would reply, “No, I want to do this” I would say “Let’s schedule our classes together.” He would reply, “I already scheduled.” We never really took classes together and we never really studied together.

I didn’t know at the time, but now I know about his grades. Mine were A and Bs. I would be “Hey, dude look at my grades” and he would tell me what he got but never show me... However, the whole time he was lying.

We talked about it. [H]e was afraid to let me know. We’ve always been open with each other until then. Maybe it was lying. I don’t know. None of us understood. Why didn’t he say anything? We could of helped him. We both end up in the same college and also ended up as roommates. We were in the young college program since the sixth grade. We got in the program together and we just were best friends.

We consider each other best friends. I don’t know. Because you know we got each other’s back and like we just mesh good, I guess. I don’t know how to say why we’re best friends. I love him, he is cool dude to be around and we have a good time together. We laugh at each others’ sense of humor, we like the same stuff, same interest you know what I’m saying, like you know, cool.

I did not ever confront because I’m not supposed to be going through his stuff. Even though I did ask him one time why didn’t you tell [me] you were having issues? He said, “Oh man I’m just going through so much stuff at home.” [A]t home I have issues too. But I don’t bring them to school. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1364-1439)

The school difference between Cupid’s situation to mine is, I do not think I would never say this, but his mother stresses different things in life. . . She never instills certain things in [him]. He could get pride [from] school... My older cousin would say that my Grandmother has wisdom raising me. She taught me the things you needed to know and she pushes you away from her. Cupid’s mom teaches him some things but then she holds him [to her] and... he never got the chance to be him[self] until we got to college. By the time you get to college, you should [be finished with] discovery[ing] yourself. [By college] you remember the important stuff... (Original Transcript Number Lines 1497-1581)

Family

My dad went to jail and he still in the area and lives by Ino’s Pizza. We still talk. He called me last time late at night. I am pretty sure he was high. He called me at 4:00 am. I was clearly asleep. I woke up. He was like “Man, Roy, I just want to talk to you.” I was thinking you’ve never done this before. Why are you calling me? He said, “I don’t know. You’re the only person that listens to me.” He was with D.Will’s mom and he said, “This B does not listen to me half time. You are the only person listen to me.” Um, okay, alright I’m going to

sleep. He said, “I’m about to go to sleep, but I need to talk to you so call me later.”

I might call him later. He’s gonna make some promise and if he break[s] it I can be done with him. I don’t know what type of promise he’s gonna make. I guess since both my parents are losers. I made the doctor goal part of life. I’d be the exact opposite of my parents—farthest away from a loser. It was dumb reason to do something. You should do something because you want [to] not because you want to prove you don’t want to be like something. You should do it because you want to. My Grandmamma would say, “You are going to be like your dad” when she would get mad. People like to say stuff. I guess I’m thinking maybe it’s just me, trying to be Aunti Rina or Roy. My dad’s name is Harry.

I’m the oldest boy. My mom has an older daughter and my dad has an older son. Both my older sisters are not related. Alright my mom has five baby dads and six kids. I don’t have any full brothers and sisters. My sisters are half’s and my brothers are half’s. Only one that has the same mom and dad is Brianna and Tom. My little sister and brother have the same mom and dad, same last name.

Yes, it bothers me. At least it wouldn’t bother me so much if we all didn’t have different last names. We go to the same school and no one knew that we were brothers and sisters. My older brothers and sisters and I look alike except for my older sister. We all look alike. We don’t have the same name and we don’t live with the same people.

I’m not gonna talk about it. My older sister, Joannie, I don’t know she’s just living. She lives with mommy. My oldest sister by my dad she just graduated from law school and she works at Akron Library downstairs. She teaches people to read. I don’t know if she runs the program.

Yes, I am the first out of my mom’s children to go to college. Then my older sister, from my father’s side did go to college. Yes, she graduated. She went to law school. I’m pretty sure she did. She went to law school in Akron. She went to Brown [University], graduated from Brown, then went to Akron. I don’t remember where she went to high school. We kind of have a relationship. We visit each other. I visited her at job. We’re not real close because like her mom’s trying to get away from my dad. I didn’t meet her until I was nine. I didn’t hear from her until like I was in high school.

She’s a pretty smart cookie. She went to Brown, in Rhode Island. Yeah, That is top. She has a boyfriend, a fiancée—I never met him.

It did a while ago really bother me that everyone is sort of spread out in some way. It doesn’t bother me that much [now]. It’s just like weird. Seeing us grow up and not being something [together]. My little brothers not going to track; although, my little sisters are doing pretty well in school [and] I do have a relationship with them. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1145-1267)

My family had its ups and downs. My focus came from, I think, well my Grandma a lot of times when I was little ... It’s a different environment. I would go home. Normal, I would go to my Grandma’s house. [S]he would take little

things and magnified them by 10. I remember one time when I was little she had me stand in front of my uncle and my aunt and sing a little song we sang for school, [and she said,] “Oh you’re so good!”

She supported me and I would say she tr[ies] to make everything positive. She magnified everything. She made everything I don’t want to seem better, but she made everything like honorable, like everything was so profound. “WOW! Look what he doing!”

I never struggled. We were always fine. I struggled with my mom. I know what struggling looks like. I am pretty sure my Grandmother and I never struggled. I moved with my Grandmother when I was preschool. My mother left us and went to Cleveland. I went back into my Grandmother again when I was nine years old, wait I was eight years old. I would go down to her house every weekend and she would send me home with food and clothes. She would have me bring my clothes home so she could wash them. She would call and check on me on the course of the week. She would call and wake us up in the morning to go to school. Basically it was my Grandmother the whole time. My Grandmother was more a parent to me than my own parents. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1452-1495)

Cupid

Cupid was part of Cohort II. He graduated in 2007. He presently is enrolling (2011) in University of JKelly. He did attend The George State University and Salem College. He is a single man with no children. These interviews took place in Summer 2009 and were cross checked in Spring 2011.

Racial and Academic Demographics

My name is Cupid! Hello, hey Ms. Halasa. African American is what I would place myself in regards to race. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1-40)

I took all A.P. classes my junior and senior years of high school, which included A.P. Euro, A.P. Biology, A.P. Chemistry and A.P. Calculus. I think I took regular English A.P. Biology and A.P. Chemistry. (Original Transcript Number Lines 42-58)

Prior Attitude to Enrolling in the Advance Classes

I heard that the teacher was amazing. I heard it was lot work and if you fell behind it was hard to catch-up. I just heard this from different classmates,

classmates that were in A.P. Biology and ones that already took it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 83-95)

Influences to Take Class

I knew that I wanted to go to college. So, I thought the best way to see what college would be like was to take A.P. classes. I think I knew myself and [Laughter] Ms. Halasa did mention it. Ms Halasa said “Cupid you need to take my course.” [Laughter] As for Chemistry course which I took next, I don’t know, I guess us guys kinda just came up with ideas of what to take senior year. Most of us generally decided to take it together. (Original Transcript Number Lines 60-81)

Okay, back then I had a girlfriend, Natasha. We just decided me and her. We’re gonna take it together. I think the choir period around that time. We would always talk about what we wanted to take. I know me and Roy always made sure to try to take at least a class together. We took A.P. Chemistry together, A.P. Biology together; we also took A.P. Calculus together. So, in referring to those guys, also I mean my girlfriend Natasha. Then when I got in the class it was nice to see that I knew everyone. Who influenced me at that time was Roy and Natasha. Roy is my best friend and then Natasha, my girlfriend. But then it was also Ms. Halasa, my mother, and my counselor and stuff like that... Mr. Espera. (Original Transcript Number Lines 617-677)

Class Routine

I remember sitting in class and coming up with different methods to remember certain terms like drawing pictures, [Laughter] those were the funniest. I loved those. I remember taking the practice test. I remember hating to do it but it really helped out in the end.

Independent Studies was like this coursework that we were given where you would have to find definitions, come up with different ways to memorize them. There was a packet of work that went with them. Multiple choice, fill blanks and things of that nature... (Original Transcript Number Lines 145-167)

Practice tests... [were] I guess just like the exam. I think it was 100 questions and what we would do I think, I forget, either we did 10 at time... [or] we just went through and did them all. Then we turn them in and then we’d grade them, and we’d sit there in class and go through it or whatever. I remember going through those and like the couple I actually did [Laughter].

I never did just mark them but the ones I actually went through and actually took my time to do. Some of them I just looked at them, I read the question, and I just marked it based on my gut. There was a couple of them I

actually thought out and actually did fairly well on it. I was surprised. (Original Transcript Number Lines 848-873)

This book is old and it is falling apart. The class? The class! The class was fun. I liked the class. That there was a lot of people in it. And I also remember not having enough chairs. (Original Transcript Number Lines 115-127)

Labs/Skits

We would come in, I guess, I remember going over independent studies and notes. I remember our teacher would ask us what different methods we choose to remember whether pictures or different ways to remember different terms. I remember [Laughter][Laughter] the little song that she made for cells. That, that was amazing! I do remember getting an A on that test just because of that little song. That was the best memorization of all. It got us outside of the classroom and away from the books because in every other course you really just use books. She actually got us outside and we were in this big circle. She made up this little game for us then she brought us inside of it. I remember when we dressed up and acted out our different function and stuff. We each had different lines and it was like a little skit. Yeh, that was amazing!

I loved the labs, they were my favorite. I remember operating on the starfish and mostly the girls being afraid to actual cut it open. You know me, I just dived right in and juice was squirting up everywhere. Uh, it was fun. It was real messy though, but it was fun. The class kinda smelled bad after that. (Original Transcript Number Lines 202-224)

I am not trying to say that girls don't like dissection... The group I happened to be in were girls. But they are just the individual people. I mean, then you had some guys that didn't want to do it either. [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 499-517)

My taste for science actually grew cause I've never been in a class where we were able to dissect any type of anything. After dissecting I knew that either being a surgeon or just working in the medical field was definitely a possibility for me. The way I saw myself acting that possibly would put me in a situation later in life when I acted very smoothly. I had thankfully was in a group full of girls and they were very squeamish. (Original Transcript Number Lines 477-498)

Attitude Toward Teacher

More on what the teacher did. She really informed us on different ways we should go about studying. She taught us that I can only teach you so much. Our teacher was willing to meet with us in an after class study session (big smile)

until 9:00 p.m. when school closed. Janitors are kicking us out and night school is coming and we still were going to different rooms to study. She would meet with us at different coffee shops and stuff like that to go over tests. She was extremely nice and even if I wanted to talk about something personal. She was always, (PAUSE) like the ambassador of the entire school. She was in everybody's lives and helped with everything from school work and personal life or to crack jokes or eat food [Laughter](Original Transcript Number Lines 266-276)

What? Did the batteries run out? Ah. Have I been talking for 44 minutes? Laughter That's my time estimate I have a mental clock in my head. I'm just gonna ...I'm telling you all that I am enjoying this a little. Yeah, thank you. You were selfish. I'm just joking. Listen! Habookie! I gotta call Ms. Halasa that name now. I have completely no idea like none whatsoever why I decided to call her this. No. I think I heard it in a video game or something. Honestly.

I think so. I don't know which game though, but I just, I don't know. [Laughter] Well, I did wrestle Ms. Halasa in the hallways. I did suffer a little bit of brain damage. She used to beat me up. Now, I get emotional about it. She used to beat me up. She had me in one position and put me in a headlock for 15 minutes. I'm telling you I'm gonna talk you to death. Anyways, it is powerful to talk.

Ms. Halasa's flexibility with deadlines is what I thought helped to balance out other activities, like sports and other classes, and stuff like that. Like more lenient than other teachers. If she stuck to the deadlines, I think most of us would had did a little bit worse than others, like I thought that was it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 3103-3143)

Ms. Habookie. She's a very special woman. I'm glad that she's in my life amongst others, and honestly to know Ms. Halasa is a dream come true cause you never, never really have that one teacher. You know that every teacher isn't like Ms. Halasa. She's a good teacher, she actually cares. If she sees you on the street it's more than just a hi or goodbye. Like she takes time out. You know she actually wants to take the time out and cares. It's just that love, you know that she has for her students and it shows. [Laughter] (Original Transcript 3213-3367)

Test May

The A.P. exam . . . I got a 2 on it. I needed to get 3 to get college credit. I was confused. I thought, cause my teacher said not guess. For some odd reason, I heard Mr. Espera say it wrong and to answer all of them. So, I did that is why I got 2. Some of them I did not know but the ones I did know I did know. Mr. Espera was [the] Counselor.

I think he may have said it but the way I heard it or the way I interpreted what he said. I was disappointed and upset for 2. If you spent the whole year

basically learning it, I knew that I knew the material. Very upset. I was okay though cause for to me, it wasn't just for the test. You know, it was just that information. I was able to remember from taking the class itself from going to high school to going to college with me. I took it to OSU taking all this information to college. (Original Transcript Number Lines 226-264)

That's another thing I was upset, cause when we take the practice exams in class I would answer them all but Ms. Halasa reminded us always during the test you don't have to answer them all, just answer the ones you know. I'm like okay and cool with it. I think we took it in the morning, right?

And of course, I was unsure and I was completely unsure. I didn't know I was like Ms. Halasa doesn't do that. I can't help you. After you left, I'm like Mr. Espera can you? He said I can't tell you. I'm watching people walk out and I'm finishing my test. I'm watching Espera or whatever, it doesn't bother me. But then I was thinking and it was the last five minutes because the last people that was there were me and Roy. We were going through whatever and it just hit me that you don't have to answer them all. I'm like Oh my God! Right, right! Ms. Halasa had to leave. Mr. Espera had to give the test. He did read the directions.

I did not ask my question because I guess he didn't see my hand. Maybe, I was busy reading and I forgot to ask him because the test had started. Personally, I don't remember what happened. I just know that that question didn't get answered and as a result I had gotten a 2. I feel that if I had gotten that answer, I'd of had at least a 3 or a 4. I wouldn't have felt obligated to answer every single question at the time. I think in the end it was a hundred questions. I remember answering most of them. I believe so.

I don't recall. I think they did, but I'm not sure. Before taking the test even after you tell me I'm gonna ask if "okay, what, are you sure?" This experience taught me to always get clarification. I was at work and there was nothing for me to do I think last week. I actually fell asleep at my job and my boss came up to me and said "Hey are you tired?" I was like "Yeah just a little run down." You know it was late in the week, he said "Okay that's cool. You know you've done everything that you had to do for today so that's cool." (Original Transcript Number Lines 737-798)

I work at this window place up in Streetsboro. I think it's called Soft Light. I usually just sleep during the ride up there and just wobble myself to my little area. I'd go outside and have a smoke break. Well, I don't smoke so I just go outside and take a nap. I was like yeah, but I'm lazy and he said just sit right there in the chair. I was sitting over on the side over there, he was sitting by the computer and I said "Are you sure". Yeah, if I go to sleep I'm not gonna get in trouble? He's Cupid, I'm the manager. I promise you, you won't get in trouble." I went and sat down in the chair and I went to sleep.

Yes. I have to have clarification. Even after you say it to me I'm like, okay so you want me to do this *this* way. I think it made me more aware that when I have a question I should just ask it even if you know I might make you

upset me asking 50 million times. I'm gonna ask 50 million times so I don't have to redo it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 800-822)

Grades

The infamous grading scale—I would always get right below an A, a 92%. [Laughter] Well, I was kinda, it was okay. You just made me strive to get that 93 or above. We also had work that wasn't so hard like definitions and filling out our notebook a lot. I thought it was a fair class! Yeah, the class was a fair. (Original Transcript Number Lines 129-143)

I got B's yes. Yes [Laughter] I don't know, it was okay. I really wanted to get an A in the class. I'm going to become a Pediatrician. I knew that I would take this coursework in college. I get an A in high school already taking college work then it would breeze to get A's in college. I did get an A for one grade period here so that's good In Chemistry. Yes (Original Transcript Number Lines 169-200)

B in A.P. Biology class made me little testy, intense or just plain all pissed off. Cause I always got a B in this class. I hated it. I would do so well on this and that, I would get an A. I'd have like an A in one of the mid-terms or whatever. Right? I'm okay with mid-term. I'll have an A, I'll keep doing what I'm doing and I'll get an A, and then the final grade came out to be a B. I'm like I'm so tired of that B.

Grades! Honestly, I learned by going through college that grades isn't everything, but I appreciate grades though. I think grades are the right reflection on the work that I put into that course.

Honestly, I think it could be all three: Hard work, effort and learning. Because I remember taking a psychology course at OSU and I had gotten an A. I felt like it was just common sense. I really didn't have to put into anything, but then I took like it was another psychology course. It was Adolescent Psychology. And I remember getting a C. But after that course, I felt like I had learned so much that I was okay with that. It's like I don't know how to put it.

...[I]t didn't piss me off as much because I actually wanted a better grade than a C. But I was okay with it. I was able to live with it. Because just going through that course and the classes and stuff, I felt like at the end of the day after, the grades and stuff, I felt I learned something.

...Yeah. I just wanted that A, cause it's something that I could never get. I would get half way there and get it. Then I guess somewhere down the line I would just mess up, but I think with me I would just getting lazy towards the end. Very, very, very lazy. I'm like, if I just put in four more weeks of hard work I would have just gotten an A. So I'm like, okay next one, I'll do that and I never did it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 680-738)

Study

YES! YES! I feel that you were prepared for the test [May Test for Advanced Placement Biology course]. I guess maybe study more on my part (Original Transcript Number Lines 258-264)

Limits are don't overstretch yourself! You have to know yourself. All high school students should take one A.P. in high school. In college, take one hard class one easy class and one intermediate class. Do not overload yourself, otherwise, you will find yourself overworked. (Original Transcript Number Lines 335-339)

I'd study harder and I'd study harder, which means oh, it was studying. For me it was actually sitting down with my book. I always listen to a little light music in the background, putting my book open in the dining room. I would listen in classes for most classes going through high school. I would read through the material and do all the homework, but I wouldn't actually put that necessary time in. Whereas in A.P. Bio, even after all my notes, the study guide, after reading and doing definitions and stuff, I would still sit there and go back through by making little flashcards with the definition and going through it that way. I remember I went over to Natasha's house a couple of times and we would do something like that. She'd do her work and then I'm like okay, what's another way that you can remember this definition and she'd draw her little picture and I'm like okay, you know the stuff like that. I think it did help. We didn't do it often enough. I think through the entire year we only did it once or twice. Yes, we needed to put more time into it.

Limitations are imposed by my environments. For example, when scheduling classes, I know that I like to hang out. If somebody was to come in, personally I can't just kick them out of the room just cause I need to study. When I'm in OSU, I know I like to be on a dance team. I now want to have a job. I know that personally, I shouldn't schedule four or five hard classes. I should devote my individual time for studying because I'm not gonna get it. I know I could take like two or three hard classes, then maybe one of my general classes.

Cause I know that I have enough time to study for all my classes, while also being on the dance team and going to work and maybe hanging out with friends on the weekends. I think it was both. I think it was more so the environment, because I stayed in the dorm with my best friend, Roy. My other best friend, Rogers and sometimes Roy's friends would come in. We'd hang out but I think it was more so my environment. Having my best friend as a roommate in college (laugh, laugh) it was... a lot of fun. (Original Transcript Number Lines 823-912)

How Advanced Biology Course Helped

Beautiful A. P. Biology book! Love, hate ... [Laughter]. It is crazy. I took a Chemistry class and I also take a Biology class. I'm taking one now, and it's the exact same stuff. In the University that's probably why I'm breezing through it already. Because I've already seen it this book [Laughter] (Original Transcript Number Lines 97-113)

The A.P. Biology was helpful in the college transition. O, yes it was amazing. I recall different ... because I lived in a dorm with my best friend. Different peers in that class were really struggling on adapting different study strategies. They used strategies they used in high school and that really did not apply to college level. We would have this big study slam with everyone. A.P. Biology course really helped with learning how to study for this and the future. Before in high school, I really did not study but this course showed me how to and if I did, I can be successful.

I would say one thing. Success in A. P. Biology class, I say it falls on the student, parents, the teachers and just your surroundings. A.P. Bio or any A.P. class that I've ever taken, it depends on you and environment that you're placed in. The class I was in A.P. Bio you really needed to study and she [the teacher] made it fun to study. Then everyone wanted to study, and the people that did not want to opted out of the class and that did not hinder anyone else. I was taking A.P. Chemistry my senior year and I was really trying to study it. Then, you have some kids sleeping on the desk, our teacher not saying anything, and students climbing out of windows talking to other classmates. It was not the best environment to learn so, that, in itself, makes you not want to learn.

I'm a real family-oriented person. I am the first in my family to go to college. I knew, if I was going to succeed, I had to take the hardest courses. In high school that was my thought process that I wanted to get the most out of free education. I think it is the best thing! If you are going to school, instead of taking the low level math class and ace it, take a high level you can get a B or C. Do not over exert yourself, know your limits. (Original Transcript Number Lines 297-333)

Advice to Others

My advice to others is to take it seriously ... take it serious. A. P. Chemistry class, I took my senior year. I kinda went into that class laxed but I got an A in it. I was still relaxed and took it seriously. Stay on your homework. Read! That is big part, you will do fine. (Original Transcript Number Lines 278-282)

Talk about kids knowing their limits and stuff like that. Yeah, I do especially if you want to go to college. Just get that experience, so then when you

first get to collegiate level you will not be hit by the storm. There are different study methods. I would say maturity in the class. Some classes you can just BS your way through but you had to have a sense of maturity to grasp it. I do not know if that is right word. What I am saying about A.P. Bio class is to take it seriously. (Original Transcript Number Lines 376-395)

Student's Idea About Their Definition of Learning and Their Response to Prompt

The way I know I really learned something is that I'm able to take the information and not just to recite it word for word. That's just me but I actually apply it to any given situation. Math for instance I'm able to go through a story and calculate it mathematically in my head what the price is gonna be on two different purchases. So with science, I'm able to look at certain things, and, if I can't explain, it then I did not learn it. With my younger cousins, I would explain why the leaves change to this color and if I'm able to explain to them about chlorophyll and other things I learned. So that's when I actually know that I actually learned something.

The prompt:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: ...learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: "Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

After to listening to these four I think my definition was closer related to Betty Gardner. I felt the last sentence: The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. I love math class therefore it had more meaning to me than other class. It connected more to stories I had about Ms. Halasa. I learned the most out of A.P. Biology. I believe if you learn, you are most able to learn if you are actually doing what the theory is asking by actually doing something hands on. I believe me, personally, I'm able to absorb it so much better than just learning definitions and being able to spit them out. I think learning is the ability to acquire new information and use it through everyday life.

I believe it is learning. I don't think it's the type of learning that, especially with A.P. Bio, cause there is a lot of different definitions and words that you have to learn and the way we had to learn it. We had to learn it so fast and so quick that I believe that was the best way to learn was like we did. I'd think about it, the definitions that we had to learn, um my pseudomata. It was the activities that you did, like the song that you had made. When we were actually able to interact ourselves in a cycle put ourselves in a position where we could actually see people move around and see the chromosomes move around and do stuff, and I think that was like everybody memorized it. Understanding! We were able to fully understand why something is happening. You know, what it's actually doing. (Original Transcript Number Lines 519-615)

Career College

Right now I'm going to Brown Mackie College. I am studying to become an LP nurse. I was at OSU and my first quarter down there I remember taking Psychology. I took a math class. I think it was Trig Geometry. I cannot remember, it was some high level math. I am not sure. I took French class. Up there, I took two Chemistry classes and a Psychology class.

I did not take them at the same time. My first year, Psychology it was easy because memorizing terms and putting them into different situations. Math was always easy for me. One year, I over exerted myself and I knew it but I felt I could do it. However, when I got into the class I over exerted myself. French II, instead of writing French you actually had to speak it, write it and it was highly more advanced. In that class, you had to read entire poem and stories and I cannot follow the book at all. I could not get the story until we watched the movie. I took that and adolescents Psychology which was fair. I took collegiate Trig Geometry, no pre-calc. I took pre-calc, French, Psychology and also took Chemistry. Four higher level classes. I knew I was over exerting myself, and my grades faltered. (Original Transcript Number Lines 284-374)

Yes, I am planning on going back to OSU. Either in the fall or in the winter, I'm not sure. Right now I am taking Brown Mackie College. No, I graduated. Seven months of classes there and right now I'm sending my

transcripts over to the college to OSU. Hopefully, it's winter quarter. I don't want to go back until the winter. Yeah, then after that I'll just stay up there. I plan on like getting an apartment especially, all summer, and just staying up there. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1760-1800)

I knew that college would be different than high school. I knew we had to care more about our studies; however, at least care enough to teach me something in college. Freedom in college is different. Just the structure of high school having eight classes but the fact the high school teachers cared enough to catch us when we were slipping. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

Race

The prompt:

Historically being an African American male, which you defined yourself earlier, has been a source of limitation in the U.S.

[Laughter] Yes, Sir I have experienced this and seen others imposed by others just for being African-American. I've been in a couple situations myself. There were two stories.

I was still in high school. I think it was either the summer I was going to OSU or the spring. It was either my junior or senior year. I was at my grandfather's house and I was tutoring my younger cousin. After that, "You want to play a game, Cup?" He called me Cup cause he's missing some teeth. I said alright come on. I'm playing the game. He was kicking it, buddy, we were kicking it. I made him some food.

I'm gonna hang out over here because he lives on Penter St and I live on Sereel St which is farther down the street. Instead of just biking there then I'd have to come up my big hill I would always go Lanta Street, and then just go up this little hill and then come straight down to moms. I did that or whatever, and then there was a cop car coming by as I was on my bike traveling. I'm like whatever just biking and then the one cop beeped his horn, flicked on a siren and turned on his lights. He said, "Hey can you stop for a second?" I said, yeah, so I stopped. I'm sitting on my bike, my brothers' 16 speed. He said "Can you come here for a second?" He got out of his car and he said "We just need to check. Can I see your license? Whatever cause we're just checking." I guess something's been going on in that neighborhood and they were just going around checking everyone. He checked and his partner was doing into the computer, or whatever. I was just talking to him. The next think I know he liked what you say and I was like what? Then he slammed me up against the car and I was like face into the car. I'm like oh! You know what I'm saying on my side. I'm like what the heck you know. Then he was just started like the mood just changed, like his whole demeanor just changed.

No. It was general conversation. I saw you at the store or on the street I'd say "Hey, How you doing today?" and stuff like that. Then it's just like what you say and then boom. I was like what, and then he was like Gerrrr but then it just escalated from there. His partner came out of the car and I was like you know what the hell is going on?

After, I got slammed up against the car twice. I don't know why this was happening to me. Then he said, "Oh you just look like somebody that would be selling drugs." I would always carry my little bag that said 2007, my little heart bag that I got from Lyn's, and so his partner was checking and rummaging through all my stuff. He was putting it on the floor whatever and he said I couldn't find anything. I was saying "Yeah, I know I'm not into anything." Then he said, "Oh are you getting smart with me?" —with the cop whatever? I said no and he said, "Oh! You are!" and then he punched me. His partner punched me in my side you know what I mean, and then he just got back in the passenger seat. Then the first cop just like tossed me back my bike and he was, "Okay, you have a good day." I was just sitting there like what and I was.

I was on my bike. No, I don't have a car. They stopped on my bike and checked for my picture ID. They were Caucasian. They were White. And they then tossed me back to my bike. It wasn't a toss it wasn't like he gently tossed me it is more like a little shove.

I guess I know I didn't come up in the system. After they checked my bag they couldn't find anything. Do I think racial overtones are common??? I guess so. I don't really think I know I believe. In that situation? Yes! I believe if I was a White kid nothing would of happened to me. It was actually pretty funny because I biked up the street, cause I came all the way down the street. I biked up the street and some White kids, some of them were younger but there was a lot of older kids, older than me. I don't know maybe if I would have I would of had a little kid around me but still maybe nothing would have happened..

That isn't the first time. One time, I remember me and my mother were at the store. I don't remember what store it was probably Target. We were sitting in the store and it was a place where you had to wait, like a waiting room. It's like mostly White people all around and it's just me and my mom. So we're just sitting there and drinking water. Sipping and sitting there then people are going in/out. Then the one lady that just arrived, or whatever, she sat down and she was talking and laughing and then she walked in. We were like wait a minute, didn't they come in after us. I'm like no, I don't think so, cause I don't want to be the person to believe, I don't know, I guess I'm just like that. Then somebody came in like a group, I think it was a couple came in after them, went in too. My mom said, "You know we've been sitting here for a half hour, when are we going in?" The lady said "Oh yeah, you're coming up next." Okay and then another couple went in. So, like okay and then we left.

No, it wasn't at a restaurant. It was something for my mother. I don't know exactly what it was, but it wasn't a restaurant. Yes, in this situation there were racial overtones. Definitely! I don't want to say it's common. I don't want to say it is. Why, because I believe, I personally don't like, if you would ask me

like what do you define yourself as? I would say an African American. I think we're all Americans and I think the first part should be cut out anyway. I don't think I should be defined as an African American anymore. I would have hoped you know, that by this time everything that had happened in the past that I should be I'm an American. You're an American. We're all the same. The only thing is you know my skin secrets more melamine than yours. That's it.

I date, right, now a woman who is White. Um, yeah we experience things but I shoot it down. I mean, if I seen something happening, I would never let her know. I would play it off or I keep her laughing. I didn't want her to see that. Something happened recently. I can tell you two instances. One of reasons is why I protect her. I guess wherever we go we always get the look, like you know. We were just sitting here now and the little girl was right here and the grandmother just kept looking at me, you know. I'm just like whatever to me and stuff like that. I don't know if you've seen it. But you know that's natural.

It was I think freshman or sophomore year, we were going to go to the movies. We were sitting there and there was a group of three White guys by the window. I can hear them talking. "I can't believe that she's out with this nigger." So like okay, they're like we'll wait until they're about to leave. I'm gonna. They're standing still, one of them said he is gonna pretend we're about to leave and he's gonna trip and he's gonna fall into us and this probably start a fight right off the bat. I heard that and I'm joking with Natasha. You know she's cool as a cucumber. We didn't have a car, so her mother was coming to pick us up. She came and pulled up. We saw her there with a big old smile and big puffy cheeks waving and stuff. I'm like okay, so we started to walk out and we're about to pass them so I let her go first. I didn't want her to be standing behind me when they backhanded me. I let her go first and then the guy went in motion to trip and fall into me but he fell back, whatever, and I threw him up against the window and he was just stunned. He just looked at me like. I just said, "Ah man I'm glad I caught you, are you okay? Are you cool?" He replied, "Yeah, I'm fine." I told him, "I was just making sure you know you don't tripped and stuff like that." He said, "All right man." I just told him to "Have a good day. All right man. See you later." I went outside and the three guys was just staring at me. They had surprised look. I'm just standing at the window like what, do you really want to come outside and do something? Not actually talking to one of them, but mouthing the words. And I'm doing all this while Natasha is getting in the van and her mother is sitting there singing. I'm just playing it off, got in the car, and I'm not going to say anything to Natasha.

Another time was me and Natasha were at a gas station. She was getting gas and I was like "Hey, baby, do you want something?" She was like "No." I was going to buy some gum for my cousin's birthday because he likes gum. I walked in and it was a guy in this big truck, some old White guy. Natasha singing and I'm singing. I look over and he said "Fuck you, you nigger." I said some bullshit. I'm gonna beat your ass you know. I'm used to going through that but I never wanted Natasha to see nothing as bad as that. I want to protect her from everything that can possibly be a danger to her. I got out of the car and went in

the store. I came back and she's just cussing, like just outrageous. I'm just like, "Did you want some gum too? I can go get you some gum." She said "Oh! Can you believe that that M.F. said that I was a loser and I should break up with you. He doesn't even know you." She was, I've never experienced something like that. She's like, we've been going out for six years and I've never seen or heard anything like that. Then I kind of felt bad because I should not have protect her, and maybe, she would have been more accustomed to handling that situation.

When I told my mother, my mom's brother dated White girls and everything back in the day, my family they didn't have a problem. The only problem they had was, "Cupid, make sure your schoolwork is done before you talk to her on the phone. Make sure everything dealing with school is finished." Yeah, but that's a common thing no matter who she was. They would have said to me whether she was Black or White. As far as being Black or White, they didn't care in my family. They would joke about it cause my uncle he dated a lot of White girls. My mom she said, "Oh so you're just like your Uncle Jeffrey," cause I call him my Uncle Daddy.

Personally, I believe he's the one that stepped in for the father role. He's still there for me now just the same. She said, "You're just like your Uncle Daddy by dating White women." I said, "I can't stand them Black girls." She's like "Why?" If there anything like you I can't handle it and my mom would laugh and stuff. She said "Why can't you handle it" and she started punching me. I said "That's why." She said "Why?" I said, "Because you're a girl, I can't punch you back so I just got to stand here and get beat up. I'm cool."

I never talked to my uncle about the differences. He just wanted me to make sure that I was safe. "You know" he said, "Cupid, about sex you know." Just wild women in general cause Natasha was my first girlfriend anyway. Uh [Laughter] Oh one in particular, I remember having a conversation about the same subject of interracial dating with Natasha's family.

Oh, when me and Natasha first started going out. One of my other best friends, Johnson, back then before he moved to Columbus with his family, we were in football together, so we'd go to football practice and we'd always walk home together. One day I said, "Ah let's go stop over at Natasha's." They were friends too. "Let's stop over at Natasha's house." He said, "Alright cool." But I got a cramp in football, so I'm walking extremely slow. He said "Come on man, you're slow. I think I'm gonna tell the coach I'm gonna take your spot. You can't be like me, not on the football field." We just joking around and stuff like that. We wound up at her house. I'm hey, I'm still wobbling around and I said "Go knock on the door for Natasha." Her mom answered and said "Hey, I'm Johnson can Natasha come outside and talk. Her mom said "Yeah!" I went up to the door, "Hey! Ms. Henry" cause I met her mom and dad before so I gave her a hug. All three of us are outside just having fun and her dad came outside. I'd already met him. I thought it was okay. I think he had a beer cause he drinks at least a beer a day. I don't know, and actually that's his prerogative after working. He was outside, he told Natasha, "Hey can I speak to Cupid alone for a second." She was like "No." They didn't have a prior conversation about it. She was like

“No.” I was like “No that’s okay you know if he wants to talk to me that’s fine. We can talk like man to man.”

He pulled me to aside and I told “Johnson take Natasha over to the side whatever and make her laugh for a while.” I looked over and they were laughing. Mr. Henry... he’s I don’t know ... he’s funny cause he’s just like this skinny White guy figure. He looks like an anorexic Santa. He said, “You know Cupid... he said, “I heard your dating my daughter Natasha.” I responded, “Hey man, she’s a good looking woman and I’m glad to have her in my life. I don’t see where it’s going anywhere. I don’t know if it’s gonna go far or not you know, were just still in high school you know, we’re only a freshman anyways. I’ll make sure I treat her right and I’m never gonna do anything wrong.” He said, “Okay that’s good to hear. You know Cupid, my daughter’s just not another notch in your belt. You know I don’t want my daughter to be played by a player.”

I’m just sitting there and I’m listening to him. He doesn’t know me personally but he knows me now and loves me, completely loves me. He invites me to go golfing. I hate golfing, he invites me and I go to all their family functions and everything. I sit there and talk to anybody. Then he thought that I was a player and it was hilarious to me cause I was in that talk. I felt so disrespectful when I laughed cause he was being so serious. He was saying, “I don’t want my daughter to be played by a player. She’s not just another notch in your belt. I don’t want you to have sex with her and then just toss her aside you know.” I was just like wow and I laughed and I was just like “Sir, I promise you that will never happen, and if at any point in our relationship you feel that it is coming to that point, you can come and talk to me. We can take it.” Then after that I gave her a kiss and I said “I gotta go!” She said “Why?” I replied back, “Cause I gotta go home. My mom gets off at four and I always make my mom coffee, and I want to get her coffee started.” She said, “No, you’re leaving for another.” She asked “What did he say?” I said, “It’s okay let it go.” So, yeah that was the one I remember, and I didn’t tell her about it until like month later.

When I told her she was extremely upset. She got all upset with her dad and they were not talking I guess, like they used to. It was bad, that’s the main reason I didn’t want to tell her. (Original Transcript Number Lines 996-1322)

Friends

Having my best friend as a roommate in college [Laughter, laughter] it was fun. It was a lot of fun. We not only pick the same college but were roommates. Ah, well we weren’t friends way back in the day in grade school. I personally don’t remember Roy at all back then. He remembers me. He used to hate me because we were in the same class, I think it was Ms. McClem’s class, in second grade and she was always said, “Look at how Cupid colors,”—we had to color, color in lines—“and looks so nice. Yours should be like this.” Roy used to hate me. I don’t remember him but we got into this program called the Young Scholars Program, YSP for short in seventh grade. I want to say seventh or eighth

grade I think or sixth grade. It was somewhere in middle school. We had to meet up at Fairview High. Me and my mother and I think my grandmother was there. No, it was just me and my mom and we were just sitting there. They had a little dinner and we just sitting there eating our finger food. I didn't recognize anyone and the first person I seen was Roy. I was there, and there were no more seats. I think that is when I sat together. From there our friendship just blossomed. I never had a brother, but if I had to pick anyone to be my brother, it would easily be Roy. We are able to talk about everything, anything and kick it, so that's my brother.

Oh! No, the first quarter [at The Ohio State University] was a bomb [It was great]. Oh, the first two quarters that was a bomb! It was the third and fourth quarter when I actually joined dance. The second quarter, I think second quarter, I started work but it wasn't stressful at all it was fine. It was my third quarter when I put myself on a dance team and I had to work. I wanted to move up at work. I didn't just want to be a regular worker. I wanted to get paid more, and I wanted to put in my hours. I did that. Then, with the dance team, I'm pretty good at dancing. They would ask me to do some choreography. I said okay, so instead of spending some of my time studying, I would be sitting at home you know dancing in front of Roy. He said that was sweet.

Now, in the past, when we were in high school we used to always try to make sure you took one class together. At first, at first . . . I believe I know we took the same classes. We were in the same field anyway. We took the same classes but some classes couldn't meet up with our schedules. I'd take it in the morning, but he'll take it in the afternoon. We were still close and study together. He would sit on his bed and study. I would sit on my bed and study and take a practice test. Then we'd go on line and we'd check it together. Then I would say "Oh yeah well my teacher said this way, that's why I remember it."

The only actual class we had together was the 7:00 or 7:30 class we had in the morning. That was only because our counselor wanted us to go over and basically we learned about her life the entire time, which I thought it was pretty stupid.

I wanted to get my classes done early in the morning. Then sometimes a class would be filled after I signed on this day. A couple days later it would be filled. Then I'd have to take a morning class. Roy had his window opened up I want to say a couple days to a week before my window did. Because his name is Roy Moore and mine is Cupid Smeer, and they go by last names. M starts well earlier than Smeers. That is the obstacle for scheduling classes. Yeah, then especially as a freshman, you also have to wait for the entire upper graduates schedule and then they go for undergraduates. (Original Transcript Number Lines 876-994)

It was when we went to Wings Middle School. I remember working on high school mentoring program bridging the transition from middle school. It's funny like even when I was in North High. I did that thing with Ms. Fenny and we went back to Wings Middle School. I know the kids before they actually get

to Wings cause of where I live. I know pretty much all of them. I see like how they act around the neighborhood and they're definitely not bad kids. One of them lived right up the street from me. He was like two doors down. A real nice kid and I seen him and I seen other kids up there just yelling at the teachers and stuff like that. I said, "Mal come here. What are you doing?" He was like "Ah, man!" I told him no, no, you go say sorry to your teacher. Go say sorry to your teacher or I'm gonna tell your grandmother you know cause he lived with his grandmother.

I was talking to all the kids there when they were filing into their seats. Then I was gonna tell this story that was funny. I just couldn't tell it, cause I told it like to the morning class. I told it the next day, Ms. Fenny and all the kids laughed. All them wanted to talk to me afterwards about it and stuff like that but, when I seen the kids, the people that I knew I couldn't tell it. I was supposed to tell you this funny story, but I don't want to tell it cause I'm disappointed in some of the kids actions that I'm seeing right now. "I know pretty much all of you, you know just from neighborhood. I really know at least 12 of you right now. I'm gonna point you all out." I was pointing them out. "I cannot believe you are acting this way. I said it's shameful cause I know you're not like that."

It was about the fifth grade, I had competition between one of my best friends. (Original Transcript Number Lines 437-475)

We both took different roads after elementary school. I don't remember a fifth grade rivalry that wasn't really a rivalry. It wasn't real, and we never competed for stuff like that. As far as like school went I always won, but it was just spelling, he'd always get me in spelling.

My old friend Nick Roman wasn't like that. Maybe I think better, you know I think about people, but he wasn't like that and it was because we went to Wings Middle School. I don't want to blame anybody. I think it's all our personal choice but we went to Wings Middle School and that's when it stopped. I would say like seven. Key idea is when you went to middle school. Yeah, then he changed. Cause we were friends through grade school. We used to hang out at his house.

Yes, it is middle school. We didn't really compete but we still hung out though. We still hung out at his house or he'd come to my house to play football. We still kicked it at Wings School and stuff like that.

We used to hang around the same friends at middle school. I didn't know it at the time that they were considered the bad kids or popular kids but like we used to sit together. They would take two pencils to make a beat and they'd be rapping and stuff. It was just fun. They would say "Hey Cupid come hang out with us tonight. We going to smoke weed." I replied, "What? No, I'm good." Nick Roman would ask me "Do you want to roll with me?" I replied, "No, man I'm just gonna chill alright!" I guess he made that personal choice to do that. I would hope that he was doing well but I do not think so. This all started more in the sixth grade. Yeah, he had an older brother that I know, at least he just seemed like the type who ran the streets. He always wear Black. I used to go over there

and he would have bag for boxing. He used to put on gloves and play with it. He was into that. Then there come a certain time when he'd smoke weed and he'd come back later that night smelling like weed. When I first smelled it, I didn't know what it was and I asked "Is your brother smoking weed?" He replied, "Oh, that's not marijuana." (Original Transcript Number Lines 1863-1986)

Girl Friend

No, after that first time talking with her dad, I was never confronted or talked about or looked at any different from Natasha's family. At the end of our freshman year, Natasha's mom had a conversation with Natasha. As the result, it was so immense to her I guess that that's the real reason that me and her broke up our freshman year because Natasha left. She was going to Puerto Rico with 4-H or something like that. . . . She came back and I gave her . . . the first night to sleep. I talked to her the next day, we talked a couple of hours and it was perfect, cracking a laugh, and at the end she was like I think we need to take a break. I couldn't understand why. She wouldn't tell me why. Then we came back to high school and she saw me and then she wanted to get back. I wouldn't talk to her for a while. I was talking to different people about it and then I just switched.

I was getting mad. When she finally talked, she said that her mom said that's life is hard now. She's going through high school and all that kind of stuff. It is hard enough to figure out going through school. She doesn't need to complicate her life even more by going through an inter-racial relationship. I'd see her mom, hug her, kiss her and stuff like that, but I don't know if they still have fear about me being Black. I don't know. They don't really show even if they did.

Yeah, I talked to them about school and stuff even in high school. I kind of shy away from it cause I would get better grades than Natasha. Even in A.P. Biology. We'd be in class together. I got a B and Natasha would get a C. They'd say, "Oh maybe she needs to study with you" and then they would say something to Natasha. That would make Natasha feel bad. During that time, I would kind of shy away from it. "Cupid how'd you do in school?" "What you get in your grade?" I would reply, "Oh, I did okay." I remember one time Natasha had gotten like a 3.2 or something like that. They were I mentioned during report card pick up. Then she saw my mom and her mom mentioned that Natasha didn't do as good this quarter or this semester and blah, blah, blah, and my mom replied, "Oh, really." Then Natasha's mom replied, "So, how did Cupid do?" My mom said, "He got a 3.8 or something. Ms. Henry said, "Oh, yeah or really!" She is very surprised. She said, "Cupid, can I see your report card?" So, I handed it to her. She just laughed. I guess she didn't think I would do better than Natasha. Not, really! I didn't really give a care. It hurt me that she would think that I was stupid or something like that but . . . I think that's why she wanted to see my report card. Maybe, she thought I was lying, which was funny.

I remember talking to her dad and Natasha one day after school. When he took us home, I used the word “fruition.” I know how to use the word. I said it and her dad was like “Fruition?” I was like “fruition.” He told Natasha that I was not using the word right. I said “Yes, it is.” She’s responded, “What does it mean?” I said, “Natasha go look it up.” Then she said “No.” I replied, “Seriously go look it up.” Her dad didn’t believe it was a real word or that I used it in the right sentence. I had to explain to them what it was. Then Natasha went home and looked it up. She said, “Yeah there it was.” I said, “Yeah, I know, I know the word.” Sometimes I still surprise them like that, oh, you know what I mean. I’m not stupid. You know what I mean? (Original Transcript Number Lines1565-1691)

I believe that is the reason why I shield Natasha so much is because of the way that my mom tries to shield me. [Smiles] I think that’s a big part of it. She’s always been there to protect me as my mom and my dad. She loves me one minute and beats me down the next minute. My grandmother’s laughing at me, watching me. I feel like in my 20 years I’ve been through so much. Even with Natasha cheating on me [with my cousin] and stuff. I still love her and I would never want her to experience any form of bad that I had.

Natasha said that after she cheated she talked to Erin on Tuesday or Wednesday. She said that she actually thought that I was gonna smack her. She said that she deserved it and she was ready for it. This was after we talked and I was like “What?” She said, “You know you’re gonna smack me.” I replied, “No, you’re a woman. I was no man ever deserves to put his hands on you, I don’t care what...”

She just felt so bad. I told her, “No, I would never express my anger and feelings physically like that.” If I ever did that, I wouldn’t even be a man, I’d be a child. No man ever deserves to put his hands on a female, on no one. Even if we did not have a relationship, I don’t want to meet him if that ever happens; I’ve probably put an end to it. (Transcript Number Lines 2215-2291)

Family

I am the first to go to college. . . . My mother could of went to college. My Uncle Michael went to college. I don’t know why my uncle did, but my mom did not. She went through some school, whatever, and she started working up at Children’s [Hospital]. By that time, she had already had me and she couldn’t go to college. Then when she had finally really wanted to go back to college she couldn’t because I was in Ohio State Young Scholar Program. YSP had to be the first person in your family to go to college in order to get the full ride scholarship. If my mother would have went, I would have lost the scholarship. I wouldn’t have gone, but she sacrificed her education at that time for me.

The reason why I took a break from OSU is because I am very close to my family. My mom had went to the doctors and he had found a lump in her breast.

They had thought it was breast cancer and stuff like that. My grandmother had lost a couple brothers and sisters. Especially, this one year, everything happened when her mother died, her sister died, and then her brother died all in the same year within a span of four to six months. She just started losing most of her friends at church. They used to be like three rows of just her and her girls. You know the church girls. You did not want to get into it with the church girls. Hey, sometimes, they'd say "Hey handsome what you doing?" or sometimes they will say "Oh no baby you can't be doing that now you at church." You just sit there and praise the Lord. You try you know to get out of it. Then you go there now and it's just her you might see. One here or there, but most of them are sick in the hospital or something like that, and it was just wearing her down, and she was just tired.

I felt while at OSU and hearing about all of this going on, I needed to be home. Just my friends being there were not enough. I'm always making my mom laugh even when she comes home from work or, whatever, just worn out. I'm able to make her laugh and just get her through. I felt that I gave them that time now. They'll be fine you know. I was talking to my counselor and he said "Well, Cupid there's more you can do" if I continue my education and became a doctor. He said, "Cupid, there's more you can do after you've achieved the stuff that you want to do."

I said yeah that's true, but they are not always going to be there. If I had a choice between being a doctor and being someone famous or something like that, or being a good family man, I would choose being a good family man because in the end we all die. What's it worth, you know what I mean. I want to be able to provide for my family. I want to put myself in a better situation where I can provide for them in more ways, but right now I felt like that was the best way for me to actually help them. Because my grandmother's not always gonna be there, so what if I take the time and graduate from college and then she dies. Maybe, I could have been there for her more so than just doing that. Yeah, I would have guilt. If I was sure my grandmother was gonna die and I choose to stay up there, this year when she passed I would always feel guilty. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1693-1758)

Everything is stable and my mom is cool. She's right now looking for a guy. I think me being there will hold her back. She's now looking. Even last night she went kicking with her girls and stuff like that, you know what I mean. My grandmother is beautiful, she's fine and she's perfect. She's hanging out with her boyfriend a lot more. They've already been talking about getting married. He wanted to years ago. I didn't know but he's been around so long.

I'm 20 now. I attended Broadway Elementary school when I was five. My grandmother's boyfriend has been there since I was like eight or nine. He's been making rounds for a while. I don't know if he loves my grandmother. She says there are some things about him that she doesn't like. She loves him, and she would do anything for him. Yes, definitely he was good. I have a lot of respect for him. I do. At first, when he first came around I didn't like him. I thought he

just wanted to eat and stuff cause he would just always come over and eat. Then they'd sit on the couch and he'd sleep. It would be like 2:00, 3:00 in the morning, he sitting there asleep and my grandmother's sitting there watching TV. I'm like my grandmother is tired. She could be sleeping right now. Why don't you take your old butt home?

Maybe when I was 12 or 13 years old when I started to like him. He was always nice to me and he told me to try this jacket on and I'd try it on. Okay, you bought it. He said I got something for you. I'm like, whatever. The next day, I'd see him or whatever he'd have this fly suite and likes shoes and a hat to match. I'm supposed to not like you right now but you are not a bummed out guy and right now, he works for her. I don't know. Yeah! My family is very important to me and it definitely weighs more than my happiness or my prestige and career. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1802-1861)

Absent Father

I have an issue with my own father. I made a pact that I do not want to go down that road. He made me promise him that I would not. He was like I never want to see you doing this even though he was doing it. My father. He was sitting in the bed and I came by, I was real young, it was before I was two. That's when my mom got a divorce from him. He was like smoking whatever. They had already separated and he was like at his mom's house. He said, "Hey son you want to smoke this." "No" and he said, "Okay good boy I never want to see you smoke this. If I do, then you're gonna get in trouble. So, leave the room because I don't want you to breathe it in."

I did not have a relationship with him after the divorce. He is my dad, but he is not in my life now. He knows my grandfather and stuff like that. He'll go down there and talk to him like once in every blue moon. I think he did it a couple times. One time, I actually had seen him in person. I seen pictures of him, and in my mental pictures, he's light skin, big lips, um long hair, like an extremely long ponytail. That's why I used to have the little rat tail.

I remember one time I did see him; it was at my senior football year. It was after we were playing whoever and I think I did something real good. I came to the sideline. He's "Oh, what great job!" Then one of the kids named Isaiah Chane or Jim my other cousin yelled "Somebody up in the crowd wants you." I was like what? We weren't allowed to talk to the crowd. I was gonna get in trouble with the coach. They would make me do bear crawls the next day. He's like he said he was your father. I look up and I saw this short dark skinned guy. I'm just looking at him and he was like "Hey, what's up son?" First second I was upset. Then the next thing I would have said, "I'm like what's up Daddy?" that after that I turned into a little kid.

But I was like "What's up Daddy?" He was "How you doing son? I'm sorry I haven't been there..." whatever, whatever, but "You know I'm gonna give you a call you know. I'm gonna give you a call. I'm gonna give you my number.

I'm gonna send my number through grandfather." He says, "I'm gonna call you. I'm gonna make up for the lost time." He was like "I'm sorry," blah, blah, blah, but "You're gonna have yourself a great time. Have fun with whatever you're doing."

I felt like a little kid again. I was wow my uncle has been there but it hadn't been the same. I didn't explain to my mom. One day she was like well why don't you talk to me about it? Some things I'm not gonna talk to you about because you're my mother. I have more respect for you. It will be hard for me to talk to you about drinking or something like that because I don't want you to know about it. I'm not like that anyway. Then she said, "That your uncle's been there every game," but "that's my uncle but that's your Uncle's Daddy." I said, "That's my Uncle Daddy but he's not my biological father. He's not the one that had me." When I seen my dad that day I was a kid, and I think we had lost that game like many others, but I still was extremely happy. I told Natasha about it.

I was waiting on his phone number. I have yet to receive that phone number. Two years ago! I am disappointed. I'm not really upset about it. I'm just disappointed with it. I know his mother was dying and after that it happened. I just really didn't want to have a connection with him for a while. His mother was dying. My grandmother said she had passed. He asked "Do you want to come to the funeral?" We were passing messages between each other. My mom was like whatever you want to do go to it. I personally rather you not cause I know that he may still be on the streets. I don't want you to go down that road. My cousin's father elder sister had gone through pretty much the same. They got a divorce and their son still in his life. He doesn't sell or do anything like that but he still drinks and smokes. As a result, they both smoke cigarettes and drink. One of my cousins smoke weed sometimes. My mother didn't want that for me. I didn't want that for myself. But even if I had, I would never turn out like that.

Mom is not worried about me being like my father. Sometimes, we'll be laughing and I'll smile at her. She looks at me different and I look at her different. I know that looks mean that she thinks I look my father. She was like sometimes I make her upset. She said "Cupid when you get like this your Mommy ain't your father." It hurts me because that's the one person I don't want to be like. I know how that's bad in case you never had a father. That's one of my life's promises I made to myself. My boy, I don't want to do wrong by my mother. I never want to cheat on any girlfriend or any friend that I have. I want to always be there for my friends and make them laugh. I never want to be like my father.

Actually, I didn't cut it off the tail. It just went into the braid. That's why I got braids. I used to have like real short hair, but I always had a tail and I wanted a tail. I had it for my life until it got long and thick like his was because, he was part Puerto Rican and it was long and silky. That was my the one thing I had forgotten. Exactly, what his face looked like but I remembered that tail. Until I was 13, I wanted it to be that big.

Isn't funny how I recalled him being more light skinned, bigger lips because I was two years old. After that, I didn't have real contact with him much

after that. He was like dark skinned, even pictures. He was light skinned, he had big lips, a moustache and I would look at his picture looking at me. He was lighter than me, but like I have bigger lips and the moustache the same, the beard's the same. I was like wow, and when I actually saw him I was like wait a minute. He's just man. At that point, I honestly didn't care.

It could have been a random guy. I would have been like "Alright Pops where we going today?" It didn't matter. I do yearn for that relationship. But I'm hesitant to actually get into it. Honestly, cause it's been so long. It's not that he hasn't tried it's just my mom has warned me about it. I don't want to know him like that. The first thing, I haven't seen you since I was two. That one time, I don't want to know you for doing bad stuff. I want to see you in the best light. I do forgive him for what has happened. I don't forgive him for what he did to my mother. I'm his only son period. I don't know if he has any other kids. I'm not sure. I don't think he does.

My mother cut ties completely. I was upset with my mom for cutting those ties completely with his mother, my grandmother. I was upset with my mother. I thought she said it was her fault that they broke up because every time I seen my dad he was always smiling and laughing. He used to eat my spinach that my grandmother would make. I hated spinach. I still hate spinach. But he would say "Alright son give me a kiss" and then I'd give him a kiss. He would smile while eating my spinach and instead of me eating spinach he would give me a piece of candy.

I was two and that was last time I remember having a relationship with my father. I don't actually remember the last thing. One of my last memories I had, is where we were driving and he beat up his girl and kicked her out and stuff like that. I believe it was the time after that. He beat up a girl. This lady, I guess, it was his friend. We were driving down this long street and they had gotten into it. She was nice. She set me up in the back seat and gave me a sucker. I'm sitting back there licking it or, maybe, it was Popsicle. It was all nice and we were laughing and stuff. I don't know what's going on but it's funny, I remember kind it coming out. He pulled over. He pulled out her out by grabbing her by the hair and threw her outside. He was beating her up. He was punching her and kicking her and stuff. Then he looked back in and I'm looking at her and she's crying. She's crying because she wants to get me out of the car. I'm not her son but she wants to get me away from him. He was really crazy! Who knows what is better for me. He then said "Alright son that's how Smeer men do it, right. That's how we treat women." I looked at him like "NO!" What'd you say? And I'm looking at her and he's like son that's how Smeer men treat women. I'm crying. I said "Yes" because I was afraid. Then he went back and he kicked her again. He shoved dirt down her throat and then he got back in the car and he drove off. I never told my mother. I think I told her when I was younger but I didn't tell her what was going on about that smoking thing and him asking if I wanted it. I didn't tell her about that.

That's my last memories of my father. Even still all that, I long for a relationship. I don't want to meet him, but I don't want to meet him if that ever

happens. I would probably pull away from him. I heard things but I've heard different stories. My mom said that he is still doing you know, whatever. Then from somebody else I heard that he was a pastor somewhere, and from somebody else I heard that he wasn't a pastor but he's really in the church. He never did any of that.

I witnessed two different situations that are part of his life. My mom might be saying some things are true. No, I don't know where he's stays. I don't know if he's got the light skin. I don't know his hair type. I don't know if he's with someone. I don't know if I have a brother or a sister somewhere. I don't know if he's working or on the street. I don't know. I've heard that he's doing good, I guess. He's living in a house. He has a job and he goes to church and stuff like that. But as far as anything else. . .He's not in the neighborhood though. (Original Transcript Number Lines 1988-2231)

The Informant Reliability

That's part of the research.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS OF THE EMERGENT THEMES

Features that count in a setting do not wear their labels on their sleeves: they do not announce themselves. Researchers must see what is to be seen, given some frame of reference and some set of intentions. (Eisner, 1998, p. 33)

Introduction

The focus of this research was to gain an understanding of school science from the oral histories of six self-identified African American males who were enrolled in an Advanced Placement Biology course. The collections of their stories are an untapped resource of information about their perception of school science. These stories revealed the “unexplored areas of daily life of the non-hegemonic classes” (Portelli, 1991, p. 50). Hegemony is maintenance of domination through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific settings: the church, the state, the school, the media, the political system and the family (McLaren, 1989). Ultimately, the goal of this research was to gain understanding of the factors surrounding a non-hegemonic class, African American males, in their pursuit of entry into the science field.

The research began with questioning what was occurring with African American males and delved into “what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did” (Portelli, 1991, p. 26). In order to elucidate an understanding of this phenomena, this research examined the school science ecology of African American males’ descriptions that included their school science, their peer school science

community and their created experiences during and after graduation, and their meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The six oral histories revealed rich data about these self-identified African American males. The narratives provided the platform for conversations about their daily lives at school and at home which included informal, unwritten rules of relating to others and their personal relationships (Yow, 1994).

The rich data collected from the interviews were coded into themes and then converted into narratives. Among the six informants, several overlapping themes emerged in addition to unique themes taken from each individual informant. An in-depth description of the collection and preparation process of the narratives was described in Chapter III. The narratives have been edited for clarity and were presented in conversation style. The researcher attempted to maintain the integrity and the authenticity of the African-American students' words and voice by cross-checking with the informants. This chapter discusses the themes compiled from narrative data presented in Chapter IV. The researcher identifies the findings in this chapter and utilizes excerpts from Chapter IV of each informant individually and as two separate cohorts which are comprised of the three informants. The intention was not to compare the Cohorts I and II but rather to compare informants within Cohorts I and II.

Emergent Themes of Mars B (Cohort I)

Individual personal responsibility was an emergent theme from MarsB's narratives. MarsB used personal responsibility to define his relationship with teachers, classmates, family, and friends and to define career choice, life, and his education journey. Teachers need to make the subject they are teaching interesting and more

manageable for students; however, the individual student is still responsible for their learning despite the obstacles presented. Teachers are part of the formula for student to learn, but the student must want to learn the subject.

How do you know if a teacher can teach you? [F]irst of all, you have to want to learn whatever they're trying to teach you. They said it so many times in school: "You are going to learn if you wanna learn. We can't teach you if you don't want to be taught." First and foremost you have to want to learn before you go into that class. If you're not interested, you are not going to pay attention no matter who the teacher is.

Every teacher doesn't teach the same. Like, in Geometry class, I had two different Geometry teachers. I had Ms. Uster and Mr. Rannan. She taught differently from the way that he taught it. I picked up on it more in the way he taught it than the way she taught it. It was the same subject matter, right. I think it was more, because he did it more in plain English. Instead of throwing the Math terms at us and expecting us to know what it meant.

My AP Biology instructor was funny. She was very animated--animated! She made it seem like it was something interesting. She made it seem like she wanted to teach it to us and this is so exciting, you have to know this. You don't have to, but it's some stuff you should know.

Even though she was never prepared for class and she wasn't organized, it did not bother me. It was funny. Most teachers, when you go into their class, they're all like, "I'm the teacher." She made it seem like she was a real person. I was like, "I'm not organized, but neither is she" so, ...

[S]he was not organized, but she made you keep these really precise [thick] notebooks. As long as she had my stuff, I was straight. [Laughter]

I wish the A.P. Biology class mimic more of the college course in terms of lecture notes not necessarily the pace of the class because not all the teachers in college teach that fast pace. But, the two science classes I did taken were like boom boom boom! I felt the independent study in A.P. Biology was more like what we do in college now. I felt Ms. Halasa should have let us drown a little a bit. I think I can say this because she is not teaching anymore [Laughter].

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with

the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

I actually kind of agree with that last one [Betty Gardner] because it puts the learning on the person. It is not like a certain formula. The other ones seem like learning is this, this, this and this, period. [The last] one it's more specific and more attuned for the person. You're only going to learn what you want to learn or if you can apply what you're learning to something. You have to be able to relate it.

MarsB talked about the classmates' attitudes toward each other in terms of cliques and hierarchy of honors students' track above the regular college bound students' track of study. MarsB recognized the existence of student constructed groupings, but he made the decision to construct his own academic path. He found many classmates in the Advanced Biology course questioned his ability and admission to the course. In addition, both informants in MarsB and Troy questioned each other's intention of being enrolled in the course.

I did feel that other people in the class may have thought, "Why are you in the class?" Yeah. [Laughter] I actually asked Troy, "What are you doing here?" [Laughter] He replied, "What are you doing here?" and I replied, "I don't know!" [Laughter]

Man, that ticked me off when someone would say: "What are you doing in here?" What do you mean, what are you doing in here? What are YOU doing in here? They didn't have to ask it . . . [b]ut you could tell. They were like, "You're in here?" YEAH, I'm in here. So?

As far as I can think, it was only me and Troy [who] were the only ones not in an honors track to begin with. I cannot recall anyone else. I felt most of those people were on that honors track to begin with from Jump Street. Straight A's, straight B's whatever. So they were already like, "Oh, I'm in Honors. Like, I've been taking Honors courses since the sixth grade." I don't care.

I know I got a B in the class and it was actually a value of an A. There were people in there that had honors classes all the way through school. They barely making it and were getting stuck. Ah-hah! How does that feel? How do you like those apples? Cause I got a B and I didn't keep track. [Laughter] I don't

feel like I did anything. It didn't really feel like any work to me. As far as I think, school is easy. Of course, in hind sight it is 20/20, right?

MarsB recognized the importance of personal individualized choice. Nobody can make you learn anything unless you want to learn; however, he realized that he became a role model for other family members.

I feel my family always knew that I was smart. Up until high school, I was on the honor roll, merit roll I and I had good grades and stuff. In high school, I just fell out because I'm tired. I was kind of burnt out. My whole family said, "Man, we know you're smart." I've heard that my whole life, "You're smart. You got to apply yourself." I feel that I needed to meet everybody's expectations. I don't have to but I made them proud of me. They'll be proud of me regardless of what I do but I don't feel I should let them down. I'm actually not the oldest of the grandkids on either side. I'm actually the second oldest of the grandkids on both sides of my family as far as grandchildren goes.

The ones ahead of me kind dropped the ball a little bit. It is important for me to be a role model for the rest of the younger ones. Because this one's f'ing up and so is this one. I'm trying to show them they don't have to. I said to my brother, he's only three years younger than me, that he has his mind to go as far as he's wants to do or whatever he feels like doing in life. But, I know my younger sister; she's seventeen, she looks up to me. I see it all the time. She loves her brother. I feel like I need to set an example for her.

This is how I became the person that I am. I'm going to be me, regardless. My mom says that to me all the time. "I can't make you do anything on your own. You're going to do what you want to do." I always reply to her, "You're right. I AM going to do what I wanna do." I tell people that all the time.

I got suspended [and] wasn't there. I got kicked out of my Choir class with Ms. Ganer. We were in class, doing warm-ups. After warm-ups were over, we were supposed to be doing breathing exercises, and somebody said something to me and I told them to shut the F up. [S]he was like, "What did you say?" and I was like "He ..." and she [said]: "I don't care, get out of my class." And I was like, "I don't care. What are you gonna do, suspend me? I'm about to graduate." [Laughter] That's exactly what happened. I got suspended and did not walk the stage [during graduation]. I came, picked up my diploma [and said]: "I don't care, I'm leaving."

"I don't care," about the world because it did not affect [me]. I did graduate. I got my diploma.

I have that kind of attitude, I feel, “Well, I’m gonna get through it. It’s gonna work out.” It might not work out the way everybody and I want it to. I really don’t even know. That’s just the kind of person that I am.

When I first went into the military, I wasn’t the best troop. People were like, “Oh, I got paperwork. I’m gonna get in trouble.” When I was in the office the people would say, “You don’t even care, do you?” I would reply “I do care, but what can I do about it now?”

I did what I did and there is nothing I can do about it. You’re gonna give me the paperwork and I’m gonna do the same thing that I already did when I got up this morning. I’m gonna get up, I’m gonna shower, I’m gonna put my uniform on, and I’m gonna go to class or I’m gonna go to work.

Not all the time, do I take responsibility for my consequences. [Laughter] Sometimes I say to myself, “Man, that wasn’t my fault.” I will act that way because there was nothing I could do about this. There are a lot of situations where you can say, “There’s nothing I can do about it.” If I get in trouble for something, I will tell myself “Well, alright. I did it. There’s nothing I can do about it. So, just press on.” There are other situations where I had a girlfriend and I cheated on her. She would be mad and I would say, “What are you mad for? There’s nothing we can do about it now.” I didn’t mean to put myself in that situation but it happens. [Laughter]

It is a little stumbling block. As I said earlier, you have obstacles. It’s just up to you to hurdle them.

I’m getting old and I want to finish what I’m starting. Something I feel like I have a real problem with, finishing what I start. If I can sit in the Air Force for four years and take all the stuff that I’ve been through there, then college is going to be a breeze. I need to just stick it out. I need to feel that I’ve actually done something at the end of the day. Actually just yesterday at I told a girl that, “The best advice I can give you is do what you want to do. Do something you like no matter what anybody else tells you. They may think it’s stupid or they think you can’t make anything out of it. Only you can determine that.”

You can personally care but I don’t care, really. We experienced that a lot in high school with the different cliques. [E]ven if they did not realize it, the smart people have cliques [too]. You know, people with 4.0’s, 3.2’s and 3.5’s, they’re all like: “Oh, we’re smart.” Nobody cares. I think those are the people who felt like, “Well, why are you in this class?” They knew me, they knew who I was and they knew what I did. I was a clown in school. I am not going to lie. I didn’t take high school seriously. I still don’t take it seriously. It’s high school. After I get out of high school, you can have the worst grades in the world and still get into college. I’m not saying that you shouldn’t apply yourself in high school,

because you should. [I]t's a stepping stone. A friend in my class had a lot of scholarships.

MarsB recognized that ecological environment of friends is one influence on an individual, but he always returned to the emergent theme of personal responsibility.

MarsB linked personal responsibility with individual personal choice; each person is responsible for himself.

I surrounded myself with more people who were on a track of different kinds of intelligence. They were smart in different kinds of ways and they all graduated. Yes, I did get influenced by them. Because out of all my friends, I had the worst grades and I had the hardest time in high school. I feel glad as far as school stuff goes because Science and Math were my strong subjects. That's what, I'm just like, that's my stuff. All my friends were good at different stuff. My one friend was good at Language Arts. I would say, "Man, I hate that class. That's so boring." There was some stuff that I could get into but not really. My other friend he was good at Economics, politics and History. My other friend he was good at sports. He got pretty decent grades.

I know that people who are doing what they want to do still question it but "Is the juice worth the squeeze?" – that is what my political buddy would say, George. We would say this about people selling drugs on street is not worth the time. You are not getting half what you put out to get. Drug dealer may have really good day and bring out a lot of money or have a real bad day and bring in nothing. You have to be on the streets all times of night and people are constantly calling on you on your phone. It is a lot more work. Instead if you worked a regular 9-5 job then you know your pay check and you know what you are getting paid every two weeks. Juice you are getting is not worth all the squeezing you are doing.

MarsB expressed excitement about the opportunity to further study science, a subject he loves; however, he had no notion of what scientists actually do on daily basis.

He recognized that he did not precede from generations of physicians or medical-related individuals. He had a strong sense of economic status that did not include privilege.

MarsB was resourceful in investigating his journey and understanding that his goals required dedication. He acknowledged the need to accomplish that same high GPA in college that he mocked in smart high school cliques.

I don't even have to remind myself because I love what I do and what I'm going to be doing because I want to do it. I'm not going to college because somebody made me go to college. I'm not going into medicine because my dad's a doctor or my mom's a nurse and they told me that you need to do this, blah, blah, blah, you gotta go to Harvard or Yale, blah. I'm not doing it because they want me to.

I was actually interested in Science before I took the course because, like I said before, it's like stuff that you can touch and feel and see, and that's the kind of stuff that I'm into. Literature and all that stuff is cool but as far as imagination goes there is a lot imagination involved in Science. You can do different stuff with it. Nothing's ever really definite in Science because something new is always coming along.

That is what actually kind of got me into medical stuff and makes me want to become a doctor. I am studying Pre-Med Chemistry. I actually chose Chemistry instead of Biology because I've had so much of Biology because I'm in the Air Force as medic. We had to take a Biology class because we had to know all the parts of the body anatomy and physiology. I can only take so much of that stuff. I figured Chemistry would be kind of fun and different.

I enjoy science. That's like one of the best subjects you'll have in school. Language Arts is boring. History is boring. Math is alright, but it's still pretty boring. I slept many days in those classes. Science was the only classes I stayed awake in.

I know you go to school to become scientist but what do scientist do per se? I have no idea what scientists do! I know chemist works with fuels and stuff like that and biologist work in labs with disease. What do they do? Have no idea. I see all these building but what do they do. I see polymer research buildings. Is that where scientist work . . . is that where they do research like the polymer science labs? All scientists have one thing in common which is they all study . . . therefore they perform research . . . they are researchers. I thought they all worked in labs wearing lab coats and cooking up something. I had no idea what they do. You know when you see them on TV, the scientist are in labs cooking up diseases such as Outbreak and Jurassic Park. My context of scientists comes from the movies I have seen. I have not met a scientist. Wait! I have met scientists in the Air Force. The chemist I know is a White woman who is fuel developer. She is the first one. I have never seen Black scientist. I have seen Black doctors but few. I have seen Black woman as nurses. Unless you consider drug dealer a chemist. Movies are what made me want to be scientist.

I am excited about college starting. I have all these dreams and goals for college. It is pipe dream to me and I know I can do it. I am the kind person that knows stuff takes a lot of work. I am more than willing to do the work. Before I start doing the work, I will get started on the work I shouldn't do this. I am taking

my freshman class my pre-req. When graduate I want to be valedictorian and get all the crazy awards and honor society. I know I can!

In order to get in med school graduate with flying colors, I still need to take the MCATS. I was thinking about how to prepare I have to take Microbiology and Organic Chemistry. I heard O'Chem was the hardest class I will ever take. I am sure I will get tutors. They are on campus all over the place.

I am scared of whole science stuff. I know and I can get it but as I said before Ms. Halasa did break things down into easier then harder.

MarsB believed that there are many obstacles to overcome, but race should not be one of the obstacles. In fact, MarsB felt gender was a greater obstacle than the issue of race.

I try not to talk to them about it. I think "If that is really how you feel, then I'm not going to judge you based on that. If that's how you feel..." It doesn't necessarily make it the truth because everybody is presented with different opportunities. You know whether you realize it or not you might realize that you're presented with an opportunity after the opportunity is past. In high school, I had friends who were good in sports, who were good in school, who were good at writing and music. All of my friends are good at different things. They can take that and run with it, but they choose not to.

"Well, I'm Black, and you know, that presents an obstacle for me." There are obstacles in life. I know females out there who have kids and they're in school, and they don't have a boyfriend, they don't have a husband, and they're living with their parents. They are still going to school. I think it would be harder for a female than a Black male despite, whether you are a White female or a Black female. "Oh, you're a girl, you can't do this, or you can't do that." So, you know what I'm saying?

The Air Force! I look past it (issues: race, gender, political affiliations). I'm saying even if it had, I probably wouldn't have even noticed it. I probably would have thought they just had it in for me because I'm me.

Despite MarsB's feelings on race, MarsB indicated race being an issue later when it came to the cheating ring.

They were caught cheating. We all just happened to be sitting in the same area. Troy and I were interviewed [by] Ms. Halasa. My guess [was] that she thought we were somehow caught up in that because we sat in front of the other

two. They were caught cheating and she asked us if we knew anything about it. I didn't know they were cheating. I was shocked and angry that Halasa thought I was cheating because I think she asked us because we were Black.[Laughter] I felt it was I know he might have copied her homework once or twice, but I really don't remember seeing them cheating. Everybody was just working and trying to use their notes.

Emergent Themes of Zack (Cohort I)

Questioning the value of education was an emergent theme that Zack used to define his choices in regards to his life and education journey. He did not value enrolling in rigorous courses because the same diploma is offered with non-honors and advanced courses. He portrayed himself as person whose primary motivation for attending school was his interest in girls and sports.

Prior to enrolling in the A.P. Biology course, I did not really hear much about the class. I had heard Advance Placement classes [were] more difficult. I just wanted to take it just for the simple fact that I guess I could. I always wanted to take the easy way out in past. I just didn't see the point of making it more difficult for myself. I was graduating along with others. Exactly! What's the point of taking challenging classes? [Laughter] I can still graduate.

[A] double period would have been nice. We would have learned a lot more. It was a lot of information to cover. . . . Ms. Halasa should have stuck to the surface more closely and not given us any leeway. Being seniors . . . you'll have students that will be obedient and others [who] are not. I was in a lot of sports and other activities, it was hard. It really was.

I recall that when I was a senior in high school I thought more about girls and athletics than my grades. It is more about the social status . . . in the senior year. [Laughter] As a senior, it is everything about you, your friends, and your swag [way you do things and hold yourself].

A lot of my friends graduated. There was only a few that didn't graduate. . . . Obviously when they didn't, they weren't focused enough and maybe they didn't have all their priorities straight. They didn't apply themselves basically. I think anybody can graduate high school.

Zack recognized the importance of school and higher education in advancement of life. Ensuring that his siblings finish their education was more important to Zack than his own achievements in education. He defined learning as an ongoing process beyond the classroom doors to everyday life and career.

He is at MaryAnn . . . [b]ut, he still owed money to JKelly U [University]. He had previously gone to a school out of state. He could not adapt over there, a Christian college. I don't know what exactly he did; he was put on academic probation. Eventually he couldn't play football and that is his passion to play so he went to a different school. He started out at JKellyU. I told him, "You could get a scholarship, I know you could." I said I wouldn't push him into doing it. He got it! He got a scholarship at MaryAnn, a full ride scholarship, which is good. The one thing I don't like about the schools is [that they are] far too expensive. . . . Lot people do not understand that. . . . It's crazy. It's a lot of money. I can only imagine what happens when you have to pay them back and I don't want to be in that kind of predicament...

Next year. I believe everyone else will get settled in my family. I'm not sure but I would probably want to go university. I wouldn't want to go to JKelly University—not because it is not a good school but I just want to be different. I just want . . . to experience something new something different.

Oh, I think everyone should get their education and there is a lot we all don't know . . . I don't think you can ever be educated enough.

If I were to go to the university, there would be so many things I'd like to study because I want to do so much. I'd like to try everything. I'd like business administration. I've always been good in art and art design. I like computers, computer engineering or computer design, anything in science. I would really go for everything. . . . I don't think there is anything I would not like to do. I would just need to decide.

You see, success is happiness. I think if you're happy . . . you are successful. I don't think a lot of money makes you successful, . . . having a lot of friends, . . . or having a good job . . . makes you successful because you must be happy with yourself. [Although] sometimes having things you want makes you think you're success[ful].

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by

gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

After reading these definitions, I would say learning probably has to do with what Betty Gardner said. She said that gaining a new understanding is when you learn something you learn, you get a language you want to learn the information you were trying to understand. She stated the more engaged students are in creating meaning, more determined they are.

The kind of work that I do right now, I am learning ... a lot and I think whenever you do something different you have to learn. Whenever you go to a new job or do something new, obviously keep doing it and you are gonna learn to adapt to it. I know I've learned things because I was real bad before I worked there. I know I didn't know those things prior to working there.

The influence of relationships and interactions with teachers, friends, family and coaches was another emergent theme that surfaced with Zack. These relationships impacted Zack's decisions in life, accepting his responsibility, maintaining integrity, and guiding educational choices. To Zack, teachers or coaches need to illustrate genuine caring and provide fresh ideas.

There was something new every day and that is what I liked with Ms. Halasa. It really wasn't the same, like lecturing or covers the same topics, it was always something different. That's one thing I did like about that class. I mean I never knew what to expect when I was in the class. She kept stuff fresh. Ms. Halasa would do stuff. I mean she would just stomp on it do it [Laughter].

Oh, a lot of our high school teachers were positive. Pretty much all of my teachers were pretty much a positive influence. Every teacher I had there were pretty much a positive influence. They always were but you could tell when someone really cared or just had too. . . . Their emotions were there. Just the way, I mean I can't better describe it, just the way that they say things. They would really make eye contact... You can just feel they feel something. I can say that Ms. Halasa cared, I really can and it is not just because I'm sitting here with her. I mean you can tell there were a handful of teachers that really cared about our future. They really did. You can really tell. I don't know how to describe it.

My coach is the best. I don't know how to describe him. [Laughter] Yes, it was Ralph O'Hare, of course. That dude, man he ... [Laughter] I like him a lot. I like him a lot. I focus a lot. I can't say I don't like Tim (his twin brother) but I

got to work with Ralph a lot more. Since, Tim did the sprints and he was the head coach. I ran long distance in high school and Ralph was my coach that worked with me.

My first year I ran track I got the most improved runner at the end of the season. Ralph really helped me out a lot. I never got hurt or even fell. Whenever I wasn't putting much effort into it as much as I needed to, he would be there for me. He really would be there. Now coaches, I can't say all my coaches were terrible. However, my basketball coach was terrible. He did the same drills and didn't care. He cared about a couple of the athletes on the team but he didn't care for everybody. You could see that.

Yes, sports were huge for me. Sports helped me develop team work skills and it helped me develop a sense of not being alone. I always had teammates around. Track, by far helped me out a lot. I think track helped me out the most. A lot of people think that track is an individual sport because there are so many events that stand out in track but it's not. Track is probably the most team dedicated sport there probably is. When I came up in track we probably had about 60 people. We had so many people! Each event ranges from 5 to maybe even 10 athletes in each event. A lot of people don't understand how points create your score. You face an opponent on the track, each person gets a point. If you come in first you get 5 points, if you come in second you get 3 points, and if you come in third you get 1 point. At the end of the event it all adds up. Therefore, it is really competitive. Sometimes I would be fighting just to come in third, just to get one point. Just to get us something on the board. Man it was really, I really liked track. I really did!

The reason I am interested in sports, is that my family has always been sports centered. My mom likes sports but she doesn't understand football or baseball. However, she knows a lot about track. I think everybody should play sports even if they are not good at it. In fact, I think people should never say never and it does not have to be a team sport *per se*. They can just work out by running on the tread mill. I work out at Lift Works and go boxing.

Zack's development of integrity through participation and involvement with sports transferred to all facets of his life.

[T]he one reason I can never cheat is cheaters never amount to anything [b]ecause they don't think... and it's never gonna work. ...[R]emember that everyone struggles. I mean the next person can be just as wrong, ...you're better off thinking for yourself.

... I'm the kind of person [who] will not just settle for something, I'm not gonna settle for less. If I know that I'm not making the kind of money I should

be, then I won't stay. Or if I know there not treating me with the proper respect or the way I should ... be treated then I'm out. If I feel they are working me too hard I will leave also. The plastic company was a relatively easy job. I worked twelve hours a day, but I felt I had a lot of duties and I didn't feel I was compensated enough for them. [The polymer company and toy company [were] hard work each morning ...

Toy company was a sweat shop. I made a decent amount of money there. I probably made about 15 bucks an hour. It was decent enough, but I literally go there with nothing on but a tank top in the middle of wintertime and just come out doors open with sweat ... I mean if you did something wrong despite you being there for 10 years they would just walk you out. It was crazy.

Race was not a dominant theme for Zack. He believed the world has expanded opportunities to African American people.

However, I have not experienced any of those kinds of things in my life personally. No, no, I don't think... Ms. Halasa challenged [because of my] ethnic background. When she challenged me, ...she was challenging me as a person and I was never challenged like that before.... I think African-American[s] in general have pretty much passed all our limitations, all of us have. I feel we have done a lot. I do not think we should not be challenged. There's no reason why they should try to challenge us. I believe we can do it. Therefore, I believe opportunities have already been given to everyone in one way or another.

My mom is 44, she was the first African American woman to graduate from Falls High School. I think she was excited to accomplish graduation as well as being the first one but to graduate.

Emergent Themes of Troy (Cohort I)

The influence of relationships with teachers, his mother, and coaches was one of the emergent themes that developed with Troy's choices about his life and educational journey. Ms. Halasa influenced Troy's choice in enrolling in the course. Troy was comfortable with the teacher's style, her willingness to care and value her students.

I knew Ms. Halasa was teaching the class and... I knew that she didn't lecture totally in class and that did influence me because I was comfortable with her and her style of teaching.

Again, I did not hear anything from anybody else about the class prior to taking it. I had Ms. Halasa previously and I knew that she didn't lecture totally in class and that made me feel comfortable taking the AP Biology class.

Like I mentioned earlier, I knew I was going back to Ms Halasa's style of teaching. I know a teacher can teach me because Ms. Halasa was interesting. I barely went to sleep in her class. I did all this, especially when I had her class after lunch. [Laughter] I had her after lunch then I [went] to track. I would have track meet the next day and I'd come back to... class, still loving it. I mean you [talking to Ms Halasa] got my attention. I'm learning.

It's just the teaching. I think schools should be changing in the way they are teaching. You know if you got a teacher [who] doesn't really care and then you can tell. If everybody in the class is just saying this person doesn't care, then that means it. Because we [are] just the students, I don't think our opinion really matters. But, in Ms. Halasa's class, it did matter. Because I mean we'll tell her something and then she would apply it.

Troy's family structure has not been stable and has been disconnected since he was four years old. Despite this disconnection, Troy's mother was the most influential figure in his life. Their relationship kept Troy in school, away from the streets, and provided motivation for him to graduate from college.

When I saw this happen at 13, he was my closest cousin and he was my confidant. I already knew he was doing that kind of activity prior; it did not influence me to do this because [Laughter] my mom and family basically just scared the crap out of me. My mom just sat me down and told me how jail was. She said she was there for maybe a couple of hours. [Laughter] She was twelve years old and little stories at the time so she had told me it's just lonely. Then you hear the stories from all my friends [who were] on the other side that had actually been in jail and had jail time and did years. They just come out a whole different person. They go in jail smiling and come out just mean and don't really care about a whole lot of stuff anymore.

Obviously my mom talked to me at 12 and said "Hey you know here's the deal." Then she went back to college, and in the back of my mind, [I thought to myself,] "Hey, I'm gonna beat you in the long run." My mom and I have this relationship that I care about what she thinks of me.

I would have been the first to go college. My mother went back to college when I was in the 12th grade. I would have been the first but she graduated with a Bachelor's in Business, I think.

That's the reason I'm still in school cause I wanted to get the Bachelor's Degree. I'll probably go afterward to grad school when I graduate. You know what I'm saying just have one step on her [mom]. [Laughter] I'm challenging her but I do not tell her that. It's all in my head. Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

There were 13 of us together my freshman year and 12 of them didn't graduated from high school. I was the only one that passed. I don't really know what motivated me. . . . It was probably my family, my mom basically. She wanted me to graduate. I graduated because I wanted to graduate myself. I didn't want that lifestyle. I had to transition to something different.

The physical education teacher and the coaches encouraged Troy to become active in sports during his sophomore year in high school. This participation in sports developed a new positive environment and surrounded Troy with supportive teammates.

My freshman and all freshman-sophomore year, I really didn't care about a lot of this stuff only because I figured I got four years. I mean, I could make everything up, if I really had to. Getting down to crunch time, I had to go to summer school and everything. But it was just that sense of being young. I really didn't care my first two years.

My freshman year I wasn't taking it serious. They say freshman year is your funniest year. Going in, I really didn't care about a lot of stuff. I was hanging with the wrong crowd and all that, I wasn't even into sports. I didn't play sports until the 10th grade.

It was Mr. Yanculeff [Physical education teacher] that got me into sports. Mr. Yanculeff had told the coaches. He'd seen I was fast and told one of the coaches. One of the coaches came and talked to me. Then Rulo came and talked to me and told me that watch my friends basically. Rulo was a real influence for me, personally.

My coach Rulo [North High School] said to me to start looking around you and see what happening. I had that same conversation with my friends and said "Hey look around, look what's going on with all our friends, their freaking screwing up" and that didn't stop them.

I mean they told me to listen but I was just young at the time. I didn't really want. I didn't really care about what people were saying at the time. I started caring. It was when I started getting active in sports and one of my teachers had told me to just sit down and watch my friends and watch, "How many of them will graduate? How many like at the end of the year who would still be left in school and who wouldn't?"

Rulo said everything “Just sit there and watch them.” I sat there and watched them. Nobody was doing their work basically. We all come home after school just play around until the time to go into the house. Just do the same thing after that and wouldn’t care about the studying.

So Yanculeff had a lot of influence on me. I like that cranky old dude. I love that cranky old man. YEAH! Mr. Yanculeff tries to act like he does not care but he cares. He cares he broke it down for me. He looks at the “bum.” [Laughter] Yanculeff told it yeah yeah yeah the way Yanculeff said it he does not sugar coat. It to Yanculeff everyone is “bum” and “a hole.” He say that to everyone in his class “he is BUM he is Bum he is bum.” He did used the A word. He called everyone “assholes” that is how everybody was.

I mentioned earlier my mother sat me down and told me at 12, “Let me tell you how jail is.” I don’t wanna go there you know. Cause it got to the point where it was the same thing every day. We would come hang out. We came here to play football. We used, but you can’t run the same way you used to, because you smoke all that stuff. Don’t even react the same way, so I just started playing sports and separating myself from them and this stuff.

It was the coaches. I’d say Tim and Ralph O’Hare cause they would inspire just not to have me on the team. I mean you could tell like they were grateful to have me. Kids doing other things but as a team they teach the values of what a team is. I didn’t know none of them. I played football when I was younger; but it wasn’t like it was in high school. You know the whole team values, you know they care. [Laughter]

Nothing. [Laughter] Nothing. Remembering... Nothing. It’s just that [Laughter] I’m being soft that’s all. It’s emotional. Well, that is the first time I felt part of something. It was in high school. Oh yeah, I still have support; I’m not playing sports or anything. But you can tell from the people that I keep around me are around me because they want to be around me. I just don’t have ... any negative interfering with my positive at the moment. That’s one reason why I feel so positive in everything.

The second emergent theme from Troy’s narrative was portraying an image that reflects the ecological environment of his neighborhood. His mother, coaches, and physical education teacher influenced him to be on the track of graduation and not roaming the streets; however, Troy still had an image he wanted to portray. Troy’s neighborhood image defined his masculinity influencing his dress code and interaction with girls.

I don't know . . . I think that's the assumption that most people think. It's just the white tees, just the white tees and the baggy stuff. Like most people don't walk near you if you do have baggy clothes. Most of them have probably pictures on their shirts and a rubber band on my arm is significant for selling things...

Most people that sell drugs wear a rubber band on their arm. I mean, I just wear it just to wear it. I just wear the rubber band and put it on my arm, I mean I just pick up a rubber band and throw it on my arm. I mean I just seem so it's probably just habit now.

Cause I've been doing it for so long. But it's just I mean I'm used to it. So that's why I look past it. Like you can do ahead and say whatever you say, but if you have a conversation with me I bet it wouldn't be the same what you thought. You know what I'm saying.

When I was younger and I worked all those hours, I just wanted some money because more of my friends at the time were doing the negative thing. They would get a lot of money. Probably at the time, I was trying to keep up with them but, there again the negative [had] to overcome the positive. I mean I'd give my mom money but she'd probably give it back or hide it under my pillow.

I consciously trying to show [or say to] my friends, look, I'm not going down that road. I have another option. Yeah, that's what it was. I'm not going down that road. Cause like now if you got kids involved, I'm too old to be running the streets or going to jail. I won't see my kids for four or five years later. They look at me and I look at them [and] they [w]on't even recognize me. People, they got that option. They can walk right past their father and do not even know who he was. I want to be a presence in their lives

I just want to do what's right in their lives. I have two children from the same mom and another one from another. Ah man, I was being stupid. I was in track and I was getting a lot of attention from the other species. But it was just like I was in a relationship with one and the other one came a month later and I had went back to the one I was with the first time.

Troy was aware of his environment and its accepted norms. Despite Troy's desire to not become part of the streets lifestyle, he was uncomfortable with areas he did not frequent.

When, I just walked into Panera with Ms. Halasa. I survey the scene, I looked to see what everybody is doing. I don't think half the people were even looking at me. If I looked, I would have known what they were doing, it was just me being in here. This ain't the type of environment that I am used to. I know right now I'm standing out so it wasn't like me just being - Oh, my God! I'm

gonna do it just I know that I'm standing out right now and it's just the way that I feel.

No, No. I didn't feel uncomfortable, I just felt out of place maybe [At Panera]. I wasn't uncomfortable. I was just out of place.

I mean that is definitely why because you growing up in this area, you know the people, this is all you know and then you go somewhere else with the same people, with the same mentality, but they are all you know and then they look at you and you look at them and you don't recognize nobody so first thing you think is something negative.

Troy believed the ecological environment influences the choices that young people make. The roaming streets, the money from drug dealing and gang life that eventually leads to a jail mindset are strong ecological influences in life.

My other 12 friends did have some type of relationship with someone in their house, cause they wasn't out here by themselves. They never were like "I'm all by myself." I just think it was the mindset. They wanted to feel independent. Half of them went to jail and like I said they came back with "me against the world" type mentality. And it wasn't like that to begin with.

There is strong influence of running the streets to *run* the streets. I mean some of them had older brothers and with the older brothers' thing—you know like my older brother did it so I'm gonna do it. One of my friends, the older brother played football. He did track, but he was real good at basketball so he played basketball freshman year. That was it. Then after that, probably 10th grade he dropped out. He's doing the same thing he's been doing since 10th grade.

During the freshman to sophomore years, the ecological environment of the neighborhood impacted Troy's friends to withdraw from the school environment. The simple location of the neighborhood influenced their dress code and behavior. The jail time enhanced negative activity and developed a negative mindset for life.

Everybody, I hung out with at the time probably dropped out in the 10th grade. About the end of the 10th grade year, that's when I started. I [had] seen my environment around me. We did the same thing and it was true because like I'm experiencing it so.

[W]hen you grow up, you see the people in your neighborhood driving around in nice cars, laughing and everything. You know they want the same thing but they don't see like all they've been through to get all that stuff. All the time they've been in jail and everything.

Even after they spent time in jail that didn't really change them. [Be]cause everybody in jail got the same mind state. Their mind state is negative. . . . You know we all did something that we don't want to admit to or something is messed up. That's why we act the same way we do. Those all in jail just compare everything up, they just do this, this, this and this, but I'm still in jail. I don't really care. I'll do my five years and go back and don't care about it again. If I got to come back, I got to come back. Oh, man. Probably just free house and a cot.

I mean he wasn't a friend, but we had mutual friends so we were still cool. We just [weren't] close cause he was from the bottom [of the Hill] and I was on the top. And that does make a difference in the Hill. It really does matter where you live. Cause it[']s just the people you keep around. You have an understanding how things operate here, and then how things operate over there. Just like the way you act; what was the in-thing, you know, the kind of shoes you're wearing from what you wear these up here to what you wear down there. We don't wear them, so we can tell a person's not from around your neighborhood; you don't live here and talk like me.

The life style of selling drugs led to quick cash for many young people in Troy's neighborhood. Troy did not believe that the end justifies the means; negative actions cannot be justified by their intent.

My friends started goofing around obviously during freshman and sophomore year. [I]t did not start in middle school or elementary school. . . . [Then] we were always getting in trouble, getting bad grades and all that [but] you gotta be in the house—[m]y mom being everything and never staying late in school. By that time we got to high school they [my friends were] making money. They really don't care about their parents telling you to come in the house at 12. "I can't come in the house at 12, if I got more money to make."

The parents knew what they were doing. Definitely! I mean you have to know because "You got a \$100.00 pair of shoes on your feet and I didn't buy them for you." They didn't get them for them, then they came from somewhere? "How did you get them?" Then you don't really have an excuse. You say, "I don't know."

My friends were going in a different direction than I was. They totally “skipped.” I mean they dropped out of school. [Of] all my friends that I hung with the first couple years, I’m the only person that graduated [Laughter] from the entire group. I would say that’s probably 12 maybe 13 people. I don’t know why they did not. They [weren’t] motivated, I think. They had their minds on other things, like what everybody was doing in the neighborhood at the time.

To be honest[Laughter], it was drug dealing—heavy, heavy drug dealing... [A]nd if they wasn’t they was doing drugs, [they were smoking] marijuana and all that other stuff. I could see it. I sit and watched them. The way that they act and how a person’s body reacts after you’ve smoked marijuana. You can tell them that it’s fun, but you don’t look like you’re having fun. You just look like you are hungry and you tired. I didn’t see what fun it was and I just didn’t fully understand how it was just one thing that you really needed to do like every day.

Obviously, when this was occurring, I did not participate. Not at all! Oh, you get the peer pressure to go ahead. You ain’t got nothing to do. You’re not doing anything. You might as well and I just didn’t see it, I didn’t want to do it.

Dealing drugs is the fast lifestyle because you know the job you work two weeks, get paid one time. They can work the same amount of time and they double whatever I made in two weeks. Probably even triple in whatever I make in two weeks, in probably two days.

I did not get involved cause the means don’t justify the ends. I mean they mean to do it, but then the end result you can go to jail for life. [Laughter] Over a few dollars, you know what I mean, it just don’t do it for me. I could make probably a hundred thousand dollars in probably four to five months, but just to get caught with a large amount of cocaine don’t make a lot of sense. It’s not worth it. That’s another reason I already know I don’t see them doing anything. They got nice clothes and all but life is more than just having nice clothes. They don’t even have cars they just walk around with lots of money in their pockets just walking around. They don’t even own a house, they don’t have a car, all they have are clothes that they are spending it on.

Troy did state he participated in gang activity which was prominent throughout the City of Akron. Troy’s 13 friends from high school were involved with gangs; however, they did not view themselves as violent gang members for life. Except for Troy, all members of the gang did not graduate high school; this helps lead to crime.

Troy attempted to influence his friends with positive peer pressure, but ultimately, he was not successful.

Gangs were an issue when I was going through North High. Yeah, I got involved in gangs, in fact that was my 12, 13, 14 friends. We were in a gang in my freshman and sophomore years. The gang was called Mini Park that was on the top of the hill. In addition, on the hill at that time was the Squad. We had the bottom of hill called Hawks and probably West Akron Hilltop on the top and bottom from Valleys and Circle on Hill. They had all kind of gangs.

At that time they would beat people up. What we did was we'd have two people fight each other, whoever won would get in. And that was just the initiation [of] getting in [to] the gang at the time.

Our gang wasn't as intense as most gangs out there. You know with the same mentality, once you were in you always in. We was just a whole lot of kids with nothing to do so we hung out with each other every day and gave ourselves a name. It wasn't like gangs in California with Bloods and Crips. You can't get out. I wouldn't doubt that Akron has one of the largest gang activities. Everywhere you go, I believe there's a gang everywhere you go in Akron.

The certain thing I was wearing or looked a certain way indicated what gang you were in. It was probably the area I lived in. Cause, if worse come to worse everybody from the Hill knew we had two gangs on the Hill. But if somebody from the Westside were to come over, everybody clicked up against the Westside to fight over there. Man, I don't even know half the fights we got into. They would just call everyone and we just fought everybody else.

I think people in education and the community can do to help change the mindset of young people, especially young African-American males. I think just show[ing] them a different way, like there's always more than one way. I was influenced with internal motivation.

I did said it but that's peer pressure. It is another form of peer pressure. They think when you say peer pressure you're already thinking negative but there is positive peer pressure. I could go up to you and say like, "Man, you do not have to do this." I did go to one of my friends. He said "I ain't gotta do nothing," he showed me like he had at least \$7,000-\$8,000 in his hand at one time, and I was like alright. Then probably two weeks later he was in jail. I mean you gotta show them this thing is not what's everything is about.

The third emergent theme for Troy was that the enrollment in the Advanced Biology course prepared him for college by developing study habitats and time

management skills. Troy recognized that science courses, prior to AP Biology, were slow paced and did not prepare for the rigorous pace of college.

I heard that you could get a college credit. That was the only thing I was worried about because I was going to college after high school.

The book itself wasn't difficult. . . . [I]t was like a college prep course which gave you the college experience without having any college experience. When I went to college, I realize[d that the] A.P. Biology class was just like a college course but way more accelerated than a college course. [Laughter] [Laughter] And it was the first time I had a syllabus.

School prior to A.P. Biology was slow pace. And then when you got to A.P. Biology you had to care because it was fast pace. [Laughter] Being honest! I didn't like the course. I didn't like it. I mean I liked it before. I felt afterwards, oh man, it was too much. It was too much. It was just. I just think everything being thrown at me at once. That's what I'm saying.

When I look back after taking the A.P. course, the things now that I experienced in college it helped me. I'm happy I took it because of college prep. I did not have any experience in college at the time. I just wanted to see... what would it be like to go into college better than just going into college not knowing what to expect. So, I believe the course helped me.

I remember saying to Ms. Halasa, "Your class was harder than college." [Laughter] It was harder than college. The A.P. courses were sure harder than college cause I don't believe that college is that hard. My grades in college are B's and C's. You gotta at least maintain a good GPA or they kick you out immediately. I'm still in school so I'm doing alright. It just helped me. Ms. Halasa's class helped me because I get the cramming experience, believe it or not. [Laughter] I feel like I'm a better crammer, like if I have to. By test time, I could just cram the main materials and it's easier, cause I did it once before.

This A.P. Bio and other things is an experience that helps me keep up with the speed on site. They helped me keep up with the speed of college. You know cause A.P. Biology is so accelerated. [Laughter] I got in college, I thought that it was gonna be that accelerated but it's just a fast pace. It ain't the same pace so I adapted to that pace already. I just have to slow it down some and just understanding, just get the speed, like with the syllabus thing I didn't understand it until I got into college. I mean, you gave us a syllabus but I did not look at it like that. All you gotta do is follow the syllabus and you can get ahead. I just looked at it like it was a schedule. Like you do this, do this or do this. Then like most syllabus in college you know what you gotta do and when the papers due and the kind of papers you need. So, it takes syllabus to look up. I was happy I

had experience with syllabus in the A.P. Biology course. I had experience with the speed of the course in the college. It was a nice prep college course.
[Laughter]

Time management is a skill that Troy learned from enrolling in the Advanced Biology course. The activities of sports, work, and studying were a juggling act that forced Troy to manage his time effectively; therefore, this prepared him for his transition to college.

No, [it was] just the juggling [I hated.] [T]he content was alright. It was just the paces, learning the content. I want to say we did probably a chapter a week maybe and probably by Friday you had to turn everything in, test Friday, practice test Thursday maybe. And the chapters in this book [were] maybe like 40 pages maybe to a chapter. [Laughter] It's just cramming. That's what it was. It was just you had to cram every week, week after week, after week.

It was full-time in high school. My day was from eight o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then I would go to sports and then I would go to work. Then I'd ice my legs [in the evening after track]. I didn't have time to study. I usually uh, like I'd look at some when I was at work. When we got down time or we'd get sent home early some days on practices. Usually on Saturdays or Sundays, I would go through the syllabus and try to get ahead a little bit.

The routine wasn't bad and it was boring. [By the end of year] I had lost interest [A.P. Biology]. I don't know [why]... At the time I had so many things going on. — track, football and I was working maybe 30-35 [hours] a week. I was in football in the fall and track was in the spring. We did bad that year in football and then we was we did alright in track.

We went to regionals for track... [W]e were near the end [of theyear] where I had to turn in all that homework and all of the late papers that I missed. [B]y the time I came home from a track meet or something, I'd be exhausted and just ice my legs and go to sleep. I would wake up the next day [and] try to catch up in the morning but that ain't never worked. [The other teachers] didn't like me doing other people's homework in their classes and taking up their time with somebody else's studies.

When I came home from work, by that time, I was tired. I went to sleep that night and woke up like at 7:30 in the morning and just started cramming, cramming, cramming till probably I think [until] the class started at 9:45. I got a B on that test and it was just the experience because I never had to cram before, so

much material [in] so little time. So, that helped me. The A.P. class taught me about volume of work and it changed my study habits. Since, I've had that course I was able to balance things better in college.

I feel that Ms. Halasa's A.P. class was a lot thrown at you at once and that's how I feel. I'm thankful for the experience because it was an eye opener. Everything is not like it has been for the past 12 years in regular school. Regular school was slow. That's how I felt. The way that they taught. She would do everything in a week. They would do three weeks then give you a test the fourth week. By the time you'd get the test you already knew everything and I didn't care about it no more. Because you'd read the chapter over and over and over, this, this, this and this. It was slow. I'd say every two weeks; I'd say you'd get a test every two weeks probably on that Monday or something. You don't even care about it anymore. You don't have time not to not care about it because it's coming at you so fast. You just gotta deal with it, basically. Just get your study habits. I believe I have done better if I had better study habits at the time.

Race was not a prominent issue for Troy. He did recognize, though, that race was an issue in his ecological environment and the world at large. Troy's concept of race was formed from several experiences (1) the episode of cheating in class, (2) an observation of the race of business leaders, (3) the belief that interracial dating has legal consequences, (4) the White neighbors' sense of security, and (5) the election of a Black president, Mr. Barack Obama.

I remember the next day, [another student in the class,] Sue, told everybody that we were cheating. I totally remember Ms. Halasa pulling me aside before class and told me do not say anything about the cheating. I totally remember that I was going to say some jokes to Sue about it. It was nothing mean but "Oh WE! SO WE are Cheating! NOW!"

It was obvious Fannie and Noremac were sitting next to each other. As for MarsB and I, [we] were on two separate sides of the tables and were nowhere near them. The next day, Ms Halasa called everyone up told us that someone was cheating and she went through Noremac's and Fannie's test first. She saw they [had] the exact same answer[s].

Then she looked at mine. I told her that I was not cheating. I did not even answer all the questions. Then she looked at MarsB's [who] was not cheating either. I remember Ms. Halasa and Mr. Weigle called every college and ask[ed] what their cheating policy was if you got caught in their college cheating. You

were done! [Laughter] You are done! You are done! Noremac and Fannie, they got no credit and they still had to stay in the class. Ms Halasa made them stay enrolled in the class but they went to in-school. They got an F5.

I've never experienced that. The way I feel...[n]othing should limit you. There's always an alternate route around to find. If this guy right here don't like me at this company, he don't have to move the company around. I can just go somewhere else and get hired in the company. There's no reason to have limitations.

I don't believe that race is a limitation in my life. I believe it's a limitation but I just haven't experienced it. Most CEO of the company, you can only see a handful of Black people sticking out. We had 42 presidents and now the 43rd that's Black. It just sticks out. Some people is either gonna accept it. But I figure sure whoever wasn't accepting, like gee I'm gonna let you maybe lead this. I'm gonna go around here and find something else and just keep going on it to get my goal.

I joined CRAYOLA [multicultural student group] for two years. It was alright. I mean they didn't really say anything that ruffled my feathers or anything. It was just when they talked I think they would just talk because this is what they seen, not actually seen. But it's like they know this happened but they never experienced it at first. Because when you talk to somebody that really experienced something you could tell that they experienced it you ain't gonna just I wonder if he did this. I mean, you can see the emotion and everything. When they were talking about stuff, I could just look at them and know that they are just talking because you know about it. You just never really experienced it because like if you really experienced like racism or something heavy, you'd be mad and all dismissed. Then, if you've never experienced it you'd be mad because you know that's the thing to do. He called me this so I'm gonna get mad. But for what?

I thought until 12th grade that a Black man would go to jail if he dated a White woman. No one told me when I was young not to. Only my cousin George dated out of race. I remember my grandmother in wheel chair who was yellow [interracial child of Black and White parents] and my aunt looked White explain the difference between Black and White to me when I was little. I heard couple of weeks that people think mixed girls follow whatever their fathers are. My area is just Black and White for me. Now, there are many Chinese and other races.

Limitations to me were about jobs and resources not necessarily social limits. When I think of social I just like everyone else, there is low income, middle class and upper class within each of the three stages low mid and high of each. Where you live is where you learn how to act. Society teaches you a lot. Me living up there, I feel so out of place because it is too quite in comparison

where I grew up. It was quite where I used to live but majority of my life was on hill. It wasn't really quite. It doesn't make me feel uncomfortable. I just think it is unusual because when people leave their doors unlocked, these White people. It is not safe to me you know what I mean. I can believe people leave their doors unlocked at 3:00 am and anyone could come into the house and do anything.

Overlapping Emergent Themes in Cohort I

The mothers of all three informants played a pivotal role in their lives. Their fathers were present in their lives, but their mothers were the ones that influenced their choices to stay off the street. All three informants recognized the importance of having a relationship with their fathers. MarsB recognized his personality is similar to his mother.

I am an apartment person but I am still with my mom right now. I am moving out ASAP because \I just like my own space. I have always lived with my mom in until I went to the Air Force. My dad and I are cool but I always lived with my mom. My dad and I are real good. I act like my mom and I think that is why her and I do not get along. We are more alike then she would admit and that is why I am so loud.

I have a daughter and she is four years old. Being a father is cool sometimes. Being a parent is hard, but not as hard as people make it seem. That's another thing that I feel that people use as a crutch and an excuse for not giving their hundred percent. You can do whatever you want to do. You just have to overcome your obstacles. You have to want to do stuff.

Family was important to Zack, and he has a great relationship with both his mother and father.

A lot of people helped me focus. My friends and peers throughout my life, teachers, parents, sometimes it was just people. People in general. My mother by keeping me out of trouble she would punish me, if I didn't have good grades. I would get in trouble . . . probably by not having a game, anything extra or no phone. I love my phone. She took that away. When she took my phone, I knew I was in big trouble. I didn't really watch TV that much. She would just take whenever I wanted to do something extra, go to the movies or take the car, anything.

My dad is fine however he has kidney failure. They think he had kidney disease. Right now he has to go to dialysis three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. He is constantly drained, constantly looks sick, no body

weight, no muscles, he seems to be all water and he looks older. He is around 45 but he looks like he's 60 to 70 years old. If you looked at him you would think he was 60 just by looking at him.

My relationship with my father is good. Always! Definitely! African-American males may not have a good relationship with their father. A lot of people don't have one. I personally have a good relationship with my father. I think my dad holds together a positive role model to me and influence to me. He is someone to look up to. I am a male child and I need a male role model.

I think most African-American males do have relationships with their fathers. Fortunately, I would think they might. I don't know. I can't tell from friends. But then again it's always that strong mother type that if the mother is responsible she can do both the positive role model and the authority. I believe probably everything will be okay. I think not having that male figure then means the mother had to work that much harder constantly. If you don't have a father, then you have a one income household. It is more work for the mother.

Family was another influence in Troy's life. Troy has a relationship with his father, and this relationship influenced his own beliefs of being a father.

My relationship with my father is [that] we got close in our older years. He was around [during] my younger years. I just didn't want to be around him. It was just boring at his house. He lived in Riverline Park but I live on top of the Hill at the time. I didn't know anybody around there [his neighborhood]. It's like going to a new school for the first time. Every time you go out here's another one. I didn't know none of them. I don't care to know anybody down there. He was older. Some of my interests are not the same as his interests. I would play video games all day. He don't even have a video game. I just didn't stay around there listening to oldies and all that kind of stuff. I can appreciate now that I'm older cause I gotta kind of like listen to old music now because of him. Now, I can see when my kids come around I gotta have them just don't let them think the same of me when I went over there. Just have something around that they can play with and interact with them.

He didn't play personally with me. He would tell me his track stories. My father ran track too for North High. Every time I see him that's another reason I ran track. Then he started coming to my games till probably the 12th grade year. I finally got the support from him and everything.

It was like my mom supported me when I was in football she came. But she had to work many hours [during] the track seasons. So my dad would come to the track meet and it just felt good having somebody there. I'm gonna do the

same for my kids having that presence there to felt good. Being part of their lives is important.

Troy is now a father and realizes the importance of being part of his children's

lives. Troy believes education is pivotal and a vital part of preparing his children for life.

Troy's children are a reflection of his own spirit of humor and voice.

I am a father right now of three children. I feel that I am better now to give advice to my two boys and a little girl. I have a better understanding for that just because I could teach them off my experience but I believe you always got to learn for yourself. I mean I could tell them how to do something, I could help them study. I could try the repetition but my son might learn differently than my daughter, and have to do one thing differently.

I am going to emphasize education to them. They are gonna go to school. I mean the same way it was taught to me. I will sit them down and watch the crowd of people, you wait see. You're going to jail. I mean if you do dirty, you're going to jail. Because of my criminal justice background is easiest for me to describe to someone. I do this for a living. I had already seen and did everything you had done, so just stay in school and school will help you out. Education will help you out.

Oh, yah they all do! THEY ALL DO LAUGH and sound like me. Today! Today! Today! I looked and I said this dude is very annoying today. [Laughter] She said "Look at him" and alright I look at him. She said, "You are looking at yourself." Oh, man [Laughter] I was looking at him the stuff he doing today. Oh my God! Oh man! He was like, "I want this! I want that!" I said, "Yeah, we are going to get something to eat." My son said, "I want McDonalds." I replied, "Alright we are going to get McDonalds." My son kept saying, "Are we going to McDonalds. Yet, we are in the zoo for you. I do not care for these animals. [Laughter] I do not care about [the] rhino. I watch Animal Planet." He just kept walking. Then he said, "I am ready to go! I am hungry. Can we get some McDonalds?" I told him, "We are going to get some McDonalds." He repeated, "Are we are going to McDonalds? Are we going to get McDonalds?" Now as we were walking to the car. "I just told you we are going." Oh my GOSH! and then his mom said "If you say one more thing about McDonalds we are not going" and he did not say one more thing. O my God!

Summary of Emergent Themes of Cohort I

MarsB's three emergent themes were (1) the understanding of personal responsibility, (2) the notion of a scientist, and (3) the issue of gender being more of an

obstacle than race. Zack's three emergent themes were (1) the understanding that education is valuable, (2) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family and coaches and (3) the development of integrity through the participation in sports. Troy's three emergent themes were (1) the ecological neighborhood environment influences an image, (2) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped transition into higher education and (3) the issue of race surfaces in their ecological environment. The overlapping emergent theme that the three Cohort I's oral history narratives had similar was the impact of their relationship with their mothers.

Emergent Themes of D.Will (Cohort II)

An influence of relationships with teachers, friends, family, and God was one of the emergent themes that surfaced with D.Will. D.Will's relationships guided his choices about life and his educational journey. Despite the lack of family structure, D.Will maintained resilience by adjusting to his ecological family environment and found it to be a source of motivation.

Four out of my five of siblings graduated high school. I was raised by my aunt not knowing what it feels like to have a mother or father who pushes you and make[s] you go to school, or tries to help [you] better your education and that's what stuck out to me the most. My main motivation was I knew that my mom dropped out in the sixth grade and I still never met my dad but he graduated high school. He graduated from the same high school I did and took some courses for college. At that same point in time, my uncles didn't graduate and my aunt who raised me dropped out in the tenth grade. It was like okay they didn't have [any] motivation. Therefore, I made them my motivation.

D.Will valued his relationships with his siblings and strived to maintain those relationships. D.Will acted as the individual attempting to maintain some type of a

family structure. D.Will depended on his relationship with God and faith to overcome the obstacles that his family experienced.

All my siblings never been under the same roof at the same time. I'm the type of person [who] wears my heart on my sleeve. I have a feeling that my older brothers and sisters do not care if we are all close or together.

The biggest thing that happened in my life is not necessarily being raised by my mom or my dad, but it's just how I just gave it to God like years ago. I swear I gave it to God and totally forgot about it, and it's just like everything has worked okay since then. I have yet to hear any bad news about my mom such as your mom got hold of some bad stuff or your mom about to get shot or your mom was dying because she overdosed I never heard such things, once I gave it to God. I do not even worry anymore. So basically I gave it to God and that allowed me to grow.

The influence of friends for D.Will was more significant on choices of academic courses enrolled during high school. Additionally, D.Will's friend served as the primary catalyst for attending the university after high school graduation. Eventually he dropped out of college, due to negative influence of a friend who was not attending the university. His motivational drive from his family's lack of formal education only sustained him to graduate from high school but was not motivation to a completed university degree.

Or, you know, if my friends join the class then I'm interested in the class with them and—Bam!—we will be in the class together.

A couple friends [said,] "D.Will come to school. Go to school!" Now, I was just saying to myself it would have just been better to have waited six months after graduating high school and then jump into the spring semester of 08. I would have been okay instead of just jumping right into college after I graduated high school. I wanted to experience fun and take care of education. Instead, I just put my education on the backburner and did all the fun and then consequences came after that so...

It was my basic math class that was time consuming. You got to be there at 7:45 right on the dot, and I didn't have car. Sometimes I would miss the bus and then I would have to walk and it just was too much, so I just gave up on it. The second time around I decided to pick the math class in the afternoon at 1:10.

However, my friend Rayiana came home and we began to smoke and drink and I just felt school was not my priority.

D.Will believed a teacher's understanding of his/her students' needs is a crucial component of conducting a successful classroom. Furthermore, D.Will argued that the relationship with the teacher is not based on the like factor alone but the structured environment that commands control. D.Will stated that teachers who understand their content and have the ability to convey their subject matter, science knowledge, maintain student interest and engagement in the course.

Some teachers who don't have a sense of humor or just stick right to the point cannot click with students. Some teachers do not have a personality, charisma or no character about themselves therefore it's going to make it hard for their student to want to learn.

If this teacher knows me and this teacher has a bond with me then I know that he or she is able to teach me. I can learn from her or him then I'm going to join the class.

I know when a teacher is going to be able to teach me. For example, when I first was introduced to Ms. Halasa I just knew she was okay. She is a science freak because her room was full of all kinds of science stuff. She reminded me of the "magic school bus, Ms. Frizzle" [from the TV series *The Magic School Bus*], because she was always into science, and she always trying to feel out her students' interest. I guess basically what I am saying she just gets what life is about. She knew her science.

I knew Ms. Halasa could teach me because seeing her surroundings and other peers talking about her and how much she loves science. I knew that the class was going to be hard, but I knew stepping out with Ms. Halasa and being taught by her, I knew that the class would not be as hard. The work would be hard but I knew that Ms. Halasa knew what she was talking about. She was still going to school and trying to better her education, and at the same time she was willing to stay after school with us. She still knew how to make us understand material, the material was hard, and she would still try to break it down to the nitty-gritty for us to understand. I knew right then and there she was that teacher that can teach me and I was going to learn. If the teacher couldn't teach than how were we suppose to learn? Ms. Halasa taught the class well and she knew how to teach.

D.Will identified personal effort as the second emergent theme; therefore, an individual must put forth effort to advance himself. Education was the key factor in the pursuit of happiness and financial security; however, education can only be obtained through individual effort. D.Will expressed that the Advanced Placement courses prepared him for the college rigor, and he was not afraid to connect with the professors in college. Work ethic is what he believed is the thread of learning and understanding the knowledge presented in his college courses. The professor presented the material, but the individual students must put in the time to learn material.

I do not define success [only] by monetary issues. Success to me is when you are successful in your right state of mind or you can be successful with cash and just with learning— period. Life is a learning experience. . . . If you better your education then it pays off when you get the job you want. Therefore, you need to go after the materials to learn what you need from your education.

I mentioned before this course was preparing me for college. Reflecting back, this course helped me for my first year of college. Both the A.P. Biology and A.P. European [History] came in hand-in-hand with me because the courses were constant work of taking notes, asking questions and raising your hand. I was not scared to talk to my professor or teacher because of the experience in these classes. When I got to college and I started to take the courses, [and] I began to reflect back on those A.P. classes. . . . I really believe that these classes did prepare us for college. At least it did prepare me personally for college because of the type of work we always had in college. Nothing in college is handed to you.

[By] “put out” [I mean] your work ethics such as the way you are studying, reading the material or asking questions. The more that you put yourself out there to learn the material then the more you want the material to be taught to you. The better you learn the material then the better [your] understanding. The better your education and the further on you will be with your studies.

Effort was outlined in D.Will’s choice of the Betty Gardner’s prompt:

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by

gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

Basically, she is saying if the students do not take in the material and have better understanding the material through use of hands on then they are not learning something. It is just like opening game and pulling out all the pieces and just playing with the pieces without reading the instruction to know how to play the game.

The issue of racism was not an overt emergent theme; however, D.Will alluded to the larger social and political race issues. The ecological family environment consisted of large numbers of male members not being employed or educated. He placed the responsibility on the male family members' lack of effort.

Just because I am African-American male, I have never experienced any kind of negative issues in my education or in my social life. I've had my job for three years. I graduated high school. I [m] attending college. It is okay right now for me. The majority of males in my family don't attend school or don't have jobs.

It was their choice. The economy is slow, but at the same point in time how do you know that the economy is slow if you're not willing to try the economy. You are not out here trying to get a job. You are not out here trying to go to school. How can [you] tell me anything if you're not trying or even dealing with it? Their upbringing causes them to try to live the fast life and not understand... education [God] ... [those] what's important right now.

Emergent Themes of Roy (Cohort II)

Personal responsibility of the teacher, student, friend, family, and/or himself was one of the emergent themes that was revealed with Roy. Roy's lack of family structure did not deter from his responsibility to learn. Teacher's organization and demands to learn the material affected Roy's outcome in the course.

I didn't really like the structure of the class when I was actually in the class. I remember, I thought it was a little too unorganized for my taste, but I'm

not quite sure. I think . . . that, the most confusing [were] the due dates [for our assignments]. It just would confuse me . . . but the material [wasn't] hard to grasp.

The organization really got to me. I don't know. Actually, looking at the agenda it was kind of well-planned out. I can't remember if the teacher went along with the syllabus verbatim. Maybe if the teacher didn't go along with the syllabus? Maybe, I will ask her.

Here's my problem, Chemistry kicked my butt when I first started at Ohio State because when I was in Chemistry I played it as a joke. But Biology wasn't as hard because when I was in Biology class, our teacher actually made us do our work. I had to learn, so the transition was a little better.

The inability of classmates to take responsibility in meeting the demands of the Advanced Placement Biology course affected Roy's attitude toward that course.

At North High School, not all of the teachers made you do as much work as they might need you to do or you should have to do. I guess when they got to the A.P. Biology class, they [the students] were just like, "Damn." [Laughter] "Like, I actually have to work." They often expressed [this sentiment] and it affected me!

I think that's another reason I had pessimistic view towards [A.P. Biology] . . . [T]he majority of [the] class view of the class was difficult and [my classmates were] extra pissed-off. . . . They were just like, "Damn." [Laughter] "Like, I actually have to work." It affected me. . . . [but] I had people [around me] who kept me grounded, like Sophie.

The ecological family environment created the opportunity to accept Roy's responsibility in life.

The school difference between Cupid's situation to mine is, I do not think I would never say this, but his mother stresses different things in life. . . She never instills certain things in [him]. He could get pride [from] school. . . My older cousin would say that my Grandmother has wisdom raising me. She taught me the things you needed to know and she pushes you away from her. Cupid's mom teaches him some things but then she holds him [to her] and. . . he never got the chance to be him[self] until we got to college. By the time you get to college, you should [be finished with] discovery[ing] yourself. [By college] you remember the important stuff.

My family had its ups and downs. My focus came from, I think, well my Grandma a lot of times when I was little. . . . It's a different environment. I would

go home. Normal, I would go to my Grandma's house. [S]he would take little things and magnified them by 10. I remember one time when I was little she had me stand in front of my uncle and my aunt and sing a little song we sang for school, [and she said,] "Oh you're so good!"

She supported me and I would say she tr[ies] to make everything positive. She magnified everything. She made everything I don't want to seem better, but she made everything like honorable, like everything was so profound. "WOW! Look what he doing!"

I never struggled. We were always fine. I struggled with my mom. I know what struggling looks like. I am pretty sure my Grandmother and I never struggled. I moved with my Grandmother when I was preschool. My mother left us and went to Cleveland. I went back into my Grandmother again when I was nine years old, wait I was eight years old. I would go down to her house every weekend and she would send me home with food and clothes. She would have me bring my clothes home so she could wash them. She would call and check on me on the course of the week. She would call and wake us up in the morning to go to school. Basically it was my Grandmother the whole time. My Grandmother was more a parent to me than my own parents.

Yes, it bothers me. At least it wouldn't bother me so much if we all didn't have different last names. We go to the same school and no one knew that we were brothers and sisters. My older brothers and sisters and I look alike except for my older sister. We all look alike. We don't have the same name and we don't live with the same people.

The best friend, Cupid, in college did not trust friends and did not take responsibility to reach out to others for resources.

I didn't know at the time, but now I know about his grades. Mine were A and Bs. I would be "Hey, dude look at my grades" and he would tell me what he got but never show me. . . . However, the whole time he was lying. We talked about it. [H]e was afraid to let me know. We've always been open with each other until then. Maybe it was lying. I don't know. None of us understood. Why didn't he say anything? We could of helped him. We both end up in the same college and also ended up as roommates. We were in the young college program since the sixth grade. We got in the program together and we just were best friends.

Roy recognized that his personal responsibility is the final outcome of his actions.

I think [Laughter]. I'm not sure. I think it was the teacher [A.P. Biology Teacher – Ms. Halasa] but I could be wrong, I could have just been me not applying myself appropriately. When I look back now, I probably should have done more

for the class and not actually point the finger as much. At the time when I was taking the class, I was kinda pointing the finger at the teacher...

I did have a conflict with my Biology teacher, we had different styles. I prefer more organized methods. College is organized. It's a lot more organized than high school, in general. I don't know, I'm just an organized type. I'm not organized myself so I like the person that I'm dealing with to be organized, so it balances out.

I think that could be frustrating. Ms. Halasa helped us a lot actually. I remember at the end of the class. I was in her office doing makeup stuff. I was frantically doing papers at the end of things so I could turn them in for my grade. I can't say that she didn't help. And maybe, I should have applied myself more at the time. We had study groups before tests. We would come and stay for like hours and hours studying before our tests.

I see this is what I earned in A.P. Biology. I had a B my first quarter and a C the second one. First half, well technically that's good for an A.P. course, I guess. I usually don't get C's. I remember thinking to myself that I didn't apply [myself] as hard as I could have. I could have done more, studied more than I did at the time. . . . I was not satisfied [with a C].

I remember thinking to myself that I didn't apply as hard as I could have [in high school]. I could have done more, studied more than I did at the time. I couldn't tell you that I was satisfied with a C. I was not satisfied.

The materials were more familiar in college in my biology course than in my chemistry course because the demand to learn it was higher in my biology high school course. However, I did not apply myself fully. Now, I don't know [why] I was trying to think about this and why I am not doing all A level. I should be doing A level instead of getting B or C...

Roy identified the behaviors he could have applied to change his outcome.

Couple of things I would change. I would read the material, obviously, in detail. I would just pay attention more, study more, and a lot of things that I didn't do that I probably could have done to better myself in the class. . . . I think I just have a different outlook now. I matured a little, you know.

I think it's a lot of time management because I'm big procrastinator and I need to get rid of that demon. Because procrastination is the devil—hahaha!

The definition of learning is connecting it to personal responsibility in Roy's opinion.

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

Basically my definition of learning would be that I would take it in and make changes the way I think in my psyche. I should have worked harder. It's all on me. I have the information that concerned me and I didn't apply it to my everyday life like I should have.

Roy's motivation on school achievements was on the recognition of feeling good beyond the internal satisfaction of grades being earned. This sentiment of feeling reflected Roy's decision to choose a profession that concentrates on his satisfaction in connecting with people rather than monetary rewards.

When I was in high school, I think what motivated me is having something at the end of the year. Especially in middle school, we got an award. I would say that I have to get this. I have to achieve toward short goals but at college you don't. You would get the grade, you move on, you don't get the grades you move on! You know what I'm saying. It's hard for me to have the drive for four years and go with the school progress. I should be having satisfaction. Hey that's A! Just need to get done! I do not look at grades, like man, I got a C or, man, I got an A. I just like to pass and need this to get where I need to be. . . . I am weird.

I don't know what motivates me besides helping people. I think this is why I'm having issues. I don't know if I want to be a doctor in the first place besides helping people without being a doctor. I don't care about how much a doctor makes because I just want to be happy. You know I just want to enjoy life and live life with the people that make me happy. I think the people in my life are more important than stuff or the status. . . . [N]obody really cares if I'm a doctor.

Racism was not an emergent theme; however, Roy acknowledged the larger social and political ecological environment with the college groups. Within his life Roy has not experienced racism; yet, he identified an incident in Taco Bell but was uncertain if it was racism or youth.

At school I'm involved with a bunch of Black groups. I guess it's like well we can't do anything because you're a White man holding us down. I don't believe that! I think people were following me around the store. They looked suspicious. You know what I'm saying? No one ever follows me around the store. I don't feel like I'm ever discriminated against personally. A lot people feel this but I've never experienced it.

I don't know because if he did not ask me because I am an African-American male or because I am young. It could be because I'm young or maybe it's cause I don't wanna just say because I'm Black. It's like maybe he thought I would not give. I love giving to charity. You know what I'm saying. Why aren't you asking me?

He was a White guy and he is a weirdo. He works at Taco Bell. Lots of people experience blatant racism, but it's never happened to me. I do believe it's still pretty prominent? I think so. I think people may be racist. I don't know. I cannot speak of it. I did not experience it.

Emergent Themes of Cupid (Cohort II)

Fulfilling the role of hero by doing the right thing was one emergent theme in the types of relationships Cupid developed with teachers, friends, and family. These relationships guided Cupid to make decisions about his life and educational pursuit. Characteristics of a teacher that inspired Cupid to strive for excellence in challenging courses are empathetic, creative and having raised expectations for student performance.

We would come in, I guess, I remember going over independent studies and notes. I remember our teacher would ask us what different methods we choose to remember whether pictures or different ways to remember different terms. I remember [Laughter][Laughter] the little song that she made for cells. That, that was amazing! I do remember getting an A on that test just because of that little song. That was the best memorization of all. It got us outside of the classroom and away from the books because in every other course you really just use books. She actually got us outside and we were in this big circle. She made up this little game for us then she brought us inside of it. I remember when we dressed up and acted out our different function and stuff. We each had different lines and it was like a little skit. Yeh, that was amazing!

More on what the teacher did. She really informed us on different ways we should go about studying. She taught us that I can only teach you so much. Our

teacher was willing to meet with us in an after class study session (big smile) until 9:00 p.m. when school closed. Janitors are kicking us out and night school is coming and we still were going to different rooms to study. She would meet with us at different coffee shops and stuff like that to go over tests. She was extremely nice and even if I wanted to talk about something personal. She was always, (PAUSE) like the ambassador of the entire school. She was in everybody's lives and helped with everything from school work and personal life or to crack jokes or eat food [Laughter].

Ms. Halasa's flexibility with deadlines is what I thought helped to balance out other activities, like sports and other classes, and stuff like that. Like more lenient than other teachers. If she stuck to the deadlines, I think most of us would have done a little bit worse than others, like I thought that was it.

Ms. Hobookie. She's a very special woman. I'm glad that she's in my life amongst others, and honestly to know Ms. Halasa is a dream come true cause you never, never really have that one teacher. You know that every teacher isn't like Ms. Halasa. She's a good teacher, she actually cares. If she sees you on the street it's more than just a hi or goodbye. Like she takes time out. You know she actually wants to take the time out and cares. It's just that love, you know that she has for her students and it shows. [Laughter].

Cupid is a genuine hero type who is protective of all the women in his life - girlfriend, mother, and grandmother.

I believe that is the reason why I shield Natasha so much is because of the way that my mom tries to shield me. [Smiles] I think that's a big part of it. She's always been there to protect me as my mom and my dad. She loves me one minute and beats me down the next minute. My grandmother's laughing at me, watching me. I feel like in my 20 years I've been through so much. Even with Natasha cheating on me [with my cousin] and stuff. I still love her and I would never want her to experience any form of bad that I had.

Natasha said that after she cheated she talked to Erin on Tuesday or Wednesday. She said that she actually thought that I was gonna smack her. She said that she deserved it and she was ready for it. This was after we talked and I was like "What?" She said, "You know you're gonna smack me." I replied, "No, you're a woman. I was no man ever deserves to put his hands on you, I don't care what..."

I said yeah that's true, but they are not always going to be there. If I had a choice between being a doctor and being someone famous or something like that, or being a good family man, I would choose being a good family man because in the end we all die. What's it worth, you know what I mean. I want to be able to provide for my family. I want to put myself in a better situation where I can

provide for them in more ways, but right now I felt like that was the best way for me to actually help them. Because my grandmother's not always gonna be there, so what if I take the time and graduate from college and then she dies. Maybe, I could have been there for her more so than just doing that. Yeah, I would have guilt. If I was sure my grandmother was gonna die and I choose to stay up there, this year when she passed I would always feel guilty.

In the classroom environment Cupid was a hero saving the group of girls that were squeamish about dissecting.

My taste for science actually grew cause I've never been in a class where we were able to dissect any type of anything. After dissecting I knew that either being a surgeon or just working in the medical field was definitely a possibility for me. The way I saw myself acting that possibly would put me in a situation later in life when I acted very smoothly. I had thankfully was in a group full of girls and they were very squeamish.

Cupid portrayed a family loyalty that manifested from the lack of father; therefore, he became the male hero.

I felt like a little kid again. I was wow my uncle has been there but it hadn't been the same. I didn't explain to my mom. One day she was like well why don't you talk to me about it? Some things I'm not gonna talk to you about because you're my mother. I have more respect for you. It will be hard for me to talk to you about drinking or something like that because I don't want you to know about it. I'm not like that anyway. Then she said, "That your uncle's been there every game," but "that's my uncle but that's your Uncle's Daddy." I said, "That's my Uncle Daddy but he's not my biological father. He's not the one that had me." When I seen my dad that day I was a kid, and I think we had lost that game like many others, but I still was extremely happy. I told Natasha about it.

I was two and that was last time I remember having a relationship with my father. I don't actually remember the last thing. One of my last memories I had, is where we were driving and he beat up his girl and kicked her out and stuff like that. I believe it was the time after that. He beat up a girl. This lady, I guess, it was his friend. We were driving down this long street and they had gotten into it. She was nice. She set me up in the back seat and gave me a sucker. I'm sitting back there licking it or, maybe, it was Popsicle. It was all nice and we were laughing and stuff. I don't know what's going on but it's funny, I remember kind it coming out. He pulled over. He pulled out her out by grabbing her by the hair and threw her outside. He was beating her up. He was punching her and kicking her and stuff. Then he looked back in and I'm looking at her and she's crying. She's crying because she wants to get me out of the car. I'm not her son but she

wants to get me away from him. He was really crazy! Who knows what is better for me. He then said “Alright son that’s how Smeer men do it, right. That’s how we treat women.” I looked at him like “NO!” What’d you say? And I’m looking at her and he’s like son that’s how Smeer men treat women. I’m crying. I said “Yes” because I was afraid. Then he went back and he kicked her again. He shoved dirt down her throat and then he got back in the car and he drove off. I never told my mother. I think I told her when I was younger but I didn’t tell her what was going on about that smoking thing and him asking if I wanted it. I didn’t tell her about that.

A second emergent theme developed as Cupid reflected on his past. The theme was to know yourself and your limits. Cupid’s understanding of limitations involved taking challenging courses to develop strength, understand weakness, and learn from past mistakes.

Yes. I have to have clarification. Even after you say it to me I’m like, okay so you want me to do this *this* way. I think it made me more aware that when I have a question I should just ask it even if you know I might make you upset me asking 50 million times. I’m gonna ask 50 million times so I don’t have to redo it.

Limits are don’t overstretch yourself! You have to know yourself. All high school students should take one A.P. in high school. In college, take one hard class one easy class and one intermediate class. Do not overload yourself, otherwise, you will find yourself overworked.

My advice to others is to take it seriously . . . take it serious. A. P. Chemistry class, I took my senior year. I kinda went into that class laxed but I got an A in it. I was still relaxed and took it seriously. Stay on your homework. Read! That is big part, you will do fine.

I would say one thing. Success in A. P. Biology class, I say it falls on the student, parents, the teachers and just your surroundings. A.P. Bio or any A.P. class that I’ve ever taken, it depends on you and environment that you’re placed in. The class I was in A.P. Bio you really needed to study and she [the teacher] made it fun to study. Then everyone wanted to study, and the people that did not want to opted out of the class and that did not hinder anyone else. I was taking A.P. Chemistry my senior year and I was really trying to study it. Then, you have some kids sleeping on the desk, our teacher not saying anything, and students climbing out of windows talking to other classmates. It was not the best environment to learn so, that, in itself, makes you not want to learn.

The issue of race was prevalent in Cupid's personal and public life. Cupid highlighted the overt acts of racism in his description of his relationship with his White girlfriend.

I date, right now, a woman who is White. Um, yeah we experience things but I shoot it down. I mean, if I seen something happening, I would never let her know. I would play it off or I keep her laughing. I didn't want her to see that. Something happened recently. I can tell you two instances. One of reasons is why I protect her. I guess wherever we go we always get the look, like you know. We were just sitting here now and the little girl was right here and the grandmother just kept looking at me, you know. I'm just like whatever to me and stuff like that. I don't know if you've seen it. But you know that's natural.

When I told my mother, my mom's brother dated White girls and everything back in the day, my family they didn't have a problem. The only problem they had was, "Cupid, make sure your schoolwork is done before you talk to her on the phone. Make sure everything dealing with school is finished." Yeah, but that's a common thing no matter who she was. They would have said to me whether she was Black or White. As far as being Black or White, they didn't care in my family. They would joke about it cause my uncle he dated a lot of White girls. My mom she said, "Oh so you're just like your Uncle Jeffrey," cause I call him my Uncle daddy.

He pulled me to aside and I told "Johnson take Natasha over to the side whatever and make her laugh for a while." I looked over and they were laughing. Mr. Henry... he's I don't know ... he's funny cause he's just like this skinny White guy figure. He looks like an anorexic Santa. He said, "You know Cupid... he said I heard your dating my daughter Natasha." I responded, "Hey man, she's a good looking woman and I'm glad to have her in my life. I don't see where it's going anywhere. I don't know if it's gonna go far or not you know, were just still in high school you know, we're only a freshman anyways. I'll make sure I treat her right and I'm never gonna do anything wrong." He said, "Okay that's good to hear. You know Cupid, my daughter's just not another notch in your belt. You know I don't want my daughter to be played by a player." I'm just sitting there and I'm listening to him. He doesn't know me personally but he knows me now and loves me, completely loves me

There were some reservations about Cupid's intelligence in comparison to his girlfriend Natasha's grades in both the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) and individual course grades. Often Natasha's family would question Cupid's intelligence.

My mom said, “He got a 3.8 or something. Ms. Henry said, “Oh, yeah or really!” She is very surprised. She said, “Cupid, can I see your report card?” So, I handed it to her. She just laughed. I guess she didn’t think I would do better than Natasha. Not, really! I didn’t really give a care. It hurt me that she would think that I was stupid or something like that but . . . I think that’s why she wanted to see my report card. Maybe, she thought I was lying, which was funny.

I remember talking to her dad and Natasha one day after school. When he took us home, I used the word “fruition.” I know how to use the word. I said it and her dad was like “Fruition?” I was like “fruition.” He told Natasha that I was not using the word right. I said “Yes, it is.” She’s responded, “What does it mean?” I said, “Natasha go look it up.” Then she said “No.” I replied, “Seriously go look it up.” Her dad didn’t believe it was a real word or that I used it in the right sentence. I had to explain to them what it was. Then Natasha went home and looked it up. She said, “Yeah there it was.” I said, “Yeah, I know, I know the word.” Sometimes I still surprise them like that, oh, you know what I mean. I’m not stupid. You know what I mean?

Publicly race was an issue in his neighborhood, and this highlighted Cupid’s experience of riding his bicycle.

After, I got slammed up against the car twice. I don’t know why this was happening to me. Then he said, “Oh you just look like somebody that would be selling drugs.” I would always carry my little bag that said 2007, my little heart bag that I got from Lyn’s, and so his partner was checking and rummaging through all my stuff. He was putting it on the floor whatever and he said I couldn’t find anything. I was saying “Yeah, I know I’m not into anything.” Then he said, “Oh are you getting smart with me?” —with the cop whatever? I said no and he said, “Oh! You are!” and then he punched me. His partner punched me in my side you know what I mean, and then he just got back in the passenger seat. Then the first cop just like tossed me back my bike and he was, “Okay, you have a good day.” I was just sitting there like what and I was.

I was on my bike. No, I don’t have a car. They stopped on my bike and checked for my picture ID. They were Caucasian. They were White. And they then tossed me back to my bike. It wasn’t a toss it wasn’t like he gently tossed me it is more like a little shove.

I guess I know I didn’t come up in the system. After they checked my bag they couldn’t find anything. Do I think racial overtones are common??? I guess so. I don’t really think I know I believe. In that situation? Yes! I believe if I was a White kid nothing would of happened to me. It was actually pretty funny because I biked up the street, cause I came all the way down the street. I biked up the street and some White kids, some of them were younger but there was a lot of older kids, older than me. I don’t know maybe if I would of had a little kid around me but still maybe nothing would have happened.

The issue of race was also evident when Cupid traveled with his mother or his girlfriend Natasha.

No, it wasn't at a restaurant. It was something for my mother. I don't know exactly what it was, but it wasn't a restaurant. Yes, in this situation there were racial overtones. Definitely! I don't want to say it's common. I don't want to say it is. Why, because I believe, I personally don't like, if you would ask me like what do you define yourself as? I would say an African American. I think we're all Americans and I think the first part should be cut out anyway. I don't think I should be defined as an African American anymore. I would have hoped you know, that by this time everything that had happened in the past that I should be I'm an American. You're an American. We're all the same. The only thing is you know my skin secrets more melamine than yours. That's it.

Another time was me and Natasha were at a gas station. She was getting gas and I was like "Hey, baby, do you want something?" She was like "No." I was going to buy some gum for my cousin's birthday because he likes gum. I walked in and it was a guy in this big truck, some old White guy. Natasha singing and I'm singing. I look over and he said "Fuck you, you nigger." I said some bullshit. I'm gonna beat your ass you know. I'm used to going through that but I never wanted Natasha to see nothing as bad as that. I want to protect her from everything that can possibly be a danger to her. I got out of the car and went in the store. I came back and she's just cussing, like just outrageous. I'm just like, "Did you want some gum too? I can go get you some gum." She said "O! Can you believe that that M.F. said that I was a loser and I should break up with you. He doesn't even know you." She was, I've never experienced something like that. She's like, we've been going out for six years and I've never seen or heard anything like that. Then I kind of felt bad because I should not have protect her, and maybe, she would have been more accustomed to handling that situation.

Overlapping Emergent Themes in Cohort II

The Advanced Placement Biology course did provide the students with transition into college or university. Each of the informants was aware that Advanced Placement courses provided a college experience within the safety net of their high school setting. The informants expressed their views that AP Biology was a real science course compared to the other traditional high school science courses. D.Will knew the Advanced Placement courses were college courses and were challenging compared to his

other high school courses. D.Will was willing to motivate himself into these more difficult courses despite the challenges associated with the courses.

Before enrolling into A.P. Biology, I heard it . . . was a college-prep class. Therefore, I knew that it was going to be hard.

I was influenced by Ms. Halasa to take the A.P. Biology class. I also wanted to further my education and I knew it would make me work toward my goals because it was a college prep class. I was planning on going to college once I graduated. I wanted to get a feel of what college was like starting now therefore when I get to college it won't be so brand new. I will already be familiar with college because of the A.P. class that I took. Ms. Halasa influenced me because she knew I was a hard worker and it's always good to try different and new things. She pushed me to do it, so I did it.

I recall the labs being performed in this course. The one that sticks out the most to me was the starfish. . . . None of my other science classes that I took let us do hands-on labs with actual creatures that are parts of the Earth. Our other science labs had to do with like water, salt, butter or posters. But this lab was actually hands-on with us taking, doing, and messing around with an object and we were writing down the information on datasheets. It was just a more hands-on experience and it made me look as if this is actually science. This is stuff that I really wanted to do. Now, I'm in an A.P. course and this is what it is.

I mentioned before this course was preparing me for college. Reflecting back, this course helped me for my first year of college. Both the A.P. Biology and A.P. European [History] came in hand-in-hand with me because the courses were constant work of taking notes, asking questions and raising your hand. I was not scared to talk to my professor or teacher because of the experience in these classes. When I got to college and I started to take the courses, [and] I began to reflect back on those A.P. classes. . . . I really believe that these classes did prepare us for college. At least it did prepare me personally for college because of the type of work we always had in college. Nothing in college is handed to you.

Roy expressed that the Advanced Placement Biology course prepared him for the college rigor. He stressed that high school courses are the foundation to prepare for the future college courses if taught in a rigorous manner. Roy expressed that his transition into his college Biology course was made with ease; however, the transition into Chemistry college course was challenging.

If we had this interview before my biology class [in high school] I would be able to tell you verbatim what I remember from just this class. [W]hen I was taking my Bio113 in Ohio State University, a lot of the things were really familiar to me. I was like, “Oh yea, I remember this from high school.” I took this in my 11th grade year, and this is my sophomore year in college, and I still remembered it.

Here’s my problem, Chemistry kicked my butt when I first started at Ohio State because when I was in Chemistry I played it as a joke in high school. But Biology wasn’t as hard because when I was Biology class, our teacher actually made us do our work. So, I had to learn, so, the transition was a little better. [I]f you’re planning on doing something, especially if it’s science-related in college, you should really apply yourself in those [high school] classes and learn as much as you can. . . . If you learn more in high school, then your transition to college will be a lot easier.

Cupid had the foresight to understand that Advanced Placement courses would be similar to college courses without the challenges of college life.

I knew that I wanted to go to college. So, I thought the best way to see what college would be like was to take A.P. classes. I think I knew myself and [Laughter] Ms. Halasa did mention it. Ms Halasa said “Cupid you need to take my course.” [Laughter] As for Chemistry course which I took next, I don’t know, I guess us guys kinda just came up with ideas of what to take senior year. Most of us generally decided to take it together.

I got B’s yes. Yes [Laughter] I don’t know, it was okay. I really wanted to get an A in the class. I’m going to become a Pediatrician. I knew that I would take this coursework in college. I get an A in high school already taking college work then it would breeze to get A’s in college. I did get an A for one grade period here so that’s good In Chemistry. Yes

The A.P. Biology was helpful in the college transition. Oh, yes it was amazing. I recall different . . . because I lived in a dorm with my best friend. Different peers in that class were really struggling on adapting different study strategies. They used strategies they used in high school and that really did not apply to college level. We would have this big study slam with everyone. A.P. Biology course really helped with learning how to study for this and the future. Before in high school, I really did not study but this course showed me how to and if I did, I can be successful.

Talk about kids knowing their limits and stuff like that. Yeah, I do especially if you want to go to college. Just get that experience, so then when you first get to collegiate level you will not be hit by the storm. There are different study methods. I would say maturity in the class. Some classes you can just BS

your way through but you had to have a sense of maturity to grasp it. I do not know if that is right word. What I am saying about A.P. Bio class is to take it seriously.

Summary of Emergent Themes of Cohort II

D. Will's three emergent themes were (1) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family and God, (2) the individual's personal effort determines their outcomes, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in his ecological environment. Roy's three emergent themes were (1) the personal responsibility begins with the individual, teachers, students, friends, and/or family should be taken (2) the need for recognition of internal satisfaction, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in his ecological environment. Cupid's three emergent themes were (1) the role of portraying a hero, (2) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits, and (3) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life. The overlapping emergent theme that the three informants in Cohort II's oral history narratives shared was the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped with the transition into college.

Overlapping Emergent Theme of Cohort I and Cohort II

The informants provided ideas about their definition of learning and gave their response to prompts about the definition of learning. The four prompts that were presented during the interviews are listed:

Maxine Green (1978) stated: ...learning is, in one dimension, a conscious search of some kind of coherence, some kind of sense. Learning also is a process of effective new connections of experiences, of thematizing, problematizing and imposing diverse patterns on the incoherence of things. (p. 3)

Britton, Glynn, and Yeany (1991) stated: Learning, the process of acquiring new knowledge, is active and complex. This process is the result of an active of interaction of key cognitive processes, such as perception, imagery, organization, and elaboration. These processes facilitate the construction of conceptual relationships. (p. 5)

Lauren Resnick (1989) stated: Learning is a process of knowledge, construction, not only of knowledge of recording or absorption, learning is knowledge dependent. People use current knowledge to construct new knowledge. Learning is highly tuned to the situation in which it takes place. (p. 1)

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

The six informants unanimously chose Betty Gardner's definition of learning; below are each of the informants' responses to their definition of learning and reasons they chose Gardner's definition.

MarsB's Response

[H]ow do I know when I [have] really learned something? I don't know, [be]cause it sticks.

I'll remember it for years to come. History class--I really don't remember jack about History. So, I don't feel like I really learned anything. Well, that's probably because I didn't really think it was relevant.

I actually kind of agree with that last one [Betty Gardner] because it puts the learning on the person. It is not like a certain formula. The other ones seem like learning is this, this, this and this, period. [The last] one it's more specific and more attuned for the person. You're only going to learn what you want to learn or if you can apply what you're learning to something. You have to be able to relate it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 588-630)

Zack's Response

I know that I really learned something just from the fact that terms are jumping out. If we were having a conversation about biology, I don't know if I

would remember exactly what mitosis was, but I would recall the term. I mean that's how I can know I learned something. Sometimes it's not the coach that teaches you, it's much more than that.

After reading these definitions, I would say learning probably has to do with what Betty Gardner said. She said that gaining a new understanding is when you learn something you learn, you get a language you want to learn the information you were trying to understand. She stated the more engaged students are in creating meaning, more determined they are.

The kind of work that I do right now, I am learning . . . a lot and I think whenever you do something different you have to learn. Whenever you go to a new job or do something new, obviously keep doing it and you are gonna learn to adapt to it. I know I've learned things because I was real bad before I worked there. I know I didn't know those things prior to working there. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 737-781)

Troy's Response

I learned something when I can apply it or I can say I can use it, like just getting a better understand[ing] for it. If you can take a word, they can give you a definition but you can use that same word with the same definition in a different sentence. You can apply it differently. I was that way and Ms. Halasa taught that way. She just didn't lecture most of the time. I mean she would lecture, but she would have visuals. She would throw something like the labs. She had this creative sense of it and I would just remember that part of it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 973-997)

I like Betty Gardner because you are not learning about things unless you are interested. Let me think . . . I wanted to say you can discover more about subject because things have not been discovered. If you are not interested in learning, you are not interested at subject at hand. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

D. Will's Response

How do I know that I really learned something? After taking the A.P. Biology class, I was able to answer science test questions or was familiar with the material or whatever the information is being talked about in the new science class because the information seems to come back into my mind. . . . I do not struggle with the answers or materials being taught.

After reading the above statements, my thoughts are closer to Betty Gardner. I believe hands on My definition of the word "learning" to me in my own words is beginning to understand the material, understand thoughts, and understand the different data or different aspects of what is being taught to you.

You learned something by being taught something then you get it, you suck it in, you use it, you know it well to your advantage and to better your education. At least that is what I think it is. I also liked the statement she said that if they have no changes in some way of gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, inquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. Basically she is saying if the students do not taken in the material and better understanding the material then hands on then they are not learning something. It is just like opening game and pulling out all the pieces and just playing with the without reading the instruction to know how to play the game.

The more that you put out trying to learn the material then the more you will know what you learned about the material. The more work you put out, you will get a better understanding in your head and in your mind. You can better your education with the material that was taught therefore you learned.

[By] “put out” [I mean] your work ethics such as the way you are studying, reading the material or asking questions. The more that you put yourself out there to learn the material then the more you want the material to be taught to you. The better you learn the material then the better [your] understanding. The better your education and the further on you will be with your studies.

[However] my learning experience is to learn the material and always try to find the easy way out. I do not like to study too much. Therefore, as long as I learn the basics then I know it will be on a test. If I know the class is not hard then I know I can just get in and learn the material. Boom! I will take the test, ace the test and its okay. The A.P. Biology class was harder. I am saying to myself, well, this class was harder and it is time for learning. I need to study harder by putting [in] more of an effort. I should not always try to look for the easy out; you know the scapegoat, or the easy route knowing that this class is hard. A class is easy then you’ll try to take the easy way out. I thought the class was hard; therefore, I had to study harder basically saying more time, more questions, more answers, staying over late and trying to learn the material. That’s what I mean by harder, harder makes a good student. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 519-611)

Roy’s Response

I might agree with Betty Gardner’s definition of learning. I would say I’m a dumb person but I’m a quick learner. I think that learning is taking information that was given to you to different circumstances and situations in your life and [applying it] to your life. I think that learning transforms the mind. If you didn’t learn or you were unable to learn than you will always stay the same person. I am learning person because I am constantly changing. I need to use definition of learning as taking experience to life. I don’t think that they always have to be scholastic. I think the experiences that you go through in life and the people you meet and their ideas incorporate into your psyche [and make you] a better person.

I define a better person if you want to better yourself for yourself. I don't think that you would say that you're a better person to me and then say it to somebody else. I think you'd learn to be yourself.

Basically my definition of learning would be that I would take it in and make changes the way I think in my psyche. I should have worked harder. It's all on me. I have the information that concerned me and I didn't apply it to my everyday life like I should have. (Original Transcript Number Lines 915-995)

Cupid's Response

The way I know I really learned something is that I'm able to take the information and not just to recite it word for word. That's just me but I actually apply it to any given situation. Math for instance I'm able to go through a story and calculate it mathematically in my head what the price is gonna be on two different purchases. So with science, I'm able to look at certain things, and, if I can't explain, it then I did not learn it. With my younger cousins, I would explain why the leaves change to this color and if I'm able to explain to them about chlorophyll and other things I learned. So that's when I actually know that I actually learned something.

After to listening to these four I think my definition was closer related to Betty Gardner. I felt the last sentence: The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. I love math class therefore it had more meaning to me than other class. It connected more to stories I had about Ms. Halasa. I learned the most out of A.P. Biology. I believe if you learn, you are most able to learn if you are actually doing what the theory is asking by actually doing something hands on. I believe me, personally, I'm able to absorb it so much better than just learning definitions and being able to spit them out. I think learning is the ability to acquire new information and use it through everyday life.

I believe it is learning. I don't think it's the type of learning that, especially with A.P. Bio, cause there is a lot of different definitions and words that you have to learn and the way we had to learn it. We had to learn it so fast and so quick that I believe that was the best way to learn was like we did. I'd think about it, the definitions that we had to learn, um my pseudomata. It was the activities that you did, like the song that you had made. When we were actually able to interact ourselves in a cycle put ourselves in a position where we could actually see people move around and see the chromosomes move around and do stuff, and I think that was like everybody memorized it. Understanding! We were able to fully understand why something is happening. You know, what it's actually doing. (Original Transcript Number Lines 519-615)

Summary of Chapter V

Chapter V outlined the emergent themes from Chapter IV oral history narratives for each of the informants in the Cohort I and Cohort II. The informants in Cohort I emergent themes were MarsB: (1) the understanding of personal responsibility, (2) the notion of a scientist, and (3) the issue of gender being more of an obstacle than race; Zack: (1) the understanding that education is valuable, (2) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family and coaches, and (3) the development of integrity through the participation in sports; Troy: (1) the ecological neighborhood environment influences an image, (2) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped transition into higher education, and (3) the issue of race surfaces in their ecological environment. The overlapping emergent theme that the three Cohort I's oral history narratives had similar was the impact of their relationship with their mothers. The emergent themes from Cohort II were: D.Will: (1) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family, and God, (2) the individual's personal effort determines their outcomes, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in the ecological environment; Roy: (1) the personal responsibility begins with the individual, teachers, students, friends, and/or family should be taken, (2) the need for recognition of internal satisfaction, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in their ecological environment; Cupid: (1) the role of portraying a hero, (2) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits, and (3) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life. The overlapping emergent theme that the three informants in Cohort II's oral history narratives shared were the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped with the transition into college. Cohort I and Cohort II

informants' overlapping emergent theme in all six informants' oral narratives shared were that learning is defined by students' willingness to actively interact with the new materials. Chapter VI discusses these emergent themes for each of the Cohort I and Cohort II informants and the overlapping emergent theme among each cohort to provide insight on underrepresentation of African American males in Advanced Placement science courses and possible career choices. The purpose of this academic investigation, therefore, was to inform the related reasons why self-identified African American males are underrepresented in Honors and Advanced Placement science courses.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSIONS OF EMERGENT THEMES

Introduction

Chapter I introduced the study through the lens of the researcher utilizing the methodology of oral history. Chapter II housed the literature that was essential to review and to examine pertinent and current academic literature that lent to a greater understanding of this research. The intention was not only to review the published literature but also to augment this review with actual oral history narratives or testimonials from students whose attitudes, behaviors, and intentions are reflected in the literature. The testimonial further validated the current academic research.

Chapter III described the methodology of a qualitative study, the rationale of utilizing oral history, and the process by which data were collected and analyzed. In Chapter IV, the stories of the six self-identified African American males were presented. In Chapter V, the findings of emergent themes of the study addressed the isolated themes emerging from the stories that were identified from Chapter IV.

This study began with the desire to probe the lives of six self-identified African American males in Advanced Placement Biology course. The interviews conducted and the narratives presented for this oral history study provided in-depth examination of these six informants. The oral histories of these students were paramount in understanding the ecological factors contributing to their academic journey during and after high school.

Chapter VI discusses the isolated emergent themes identified in Chapter V. To further explore the purpose of this academic investigation, therefore, is to inform the related reasons why self-identified African American males are underrepresented in Honors and Advanced Placement science courses.

Introduction of Cohort I

The informants in Cohort I consisted of MarsB, Zack and Troy. The researcher was a pivotal agent in enrolling these informants into the Advanced Placement Biology course. The researcher was an active socializer in the enrollment of the students which was a way “to manipulate the student’s social world by some intentional act” (Thompson & Lewis, 2005, p. 14).

MarsB: It did benefit me from taking AP Biology class. Pretty much glad that my teachers forced me to take the class! They forced my hands and said “Take this class, or die!” [Laughter]

Zack: Ms. Halasa challenged me. She [had] seen me in the office; I might have been in trouble for something. I can’t remember. . . . She said I couldn’t pass her class even if tried so I had to take it. O, yeah—[it was] prom night. I didn’t have a ride home and Ms. Halasa drove me home and . . . I recall her challenging me.

Troy: I knew Ms. Halasa was teaching the class and . . . I knew that she didn’t lecture totally in class and that did influence me because I was comfortable with her and her style of teaching.

The overlapping theme that emerged among Cohort I is the impact of their relationship with their mothers. The theme was present with all informants; however, each individual informant had unique themes of his own. Emergent themes for MarsB’s are the personal responsibility, the notion of a scientist, and that gender is a larger obstacle than race issues. Zack’s emergent themes are the value of education, the

influence of relationships and interactions with others, and the integrity that develops through the participation in sports. The issue of race is not a prominent theme for Zack. Troy's emergent themes are the influence of relationships and interactions with others, the portrayal of an image that reflected his ecological neighborhood environment, and the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course prepared him for college. Troy recognizes that race was an issue in his ecological environment and the society at large.

Discussion of Emergent Themes of Mars B (Cohort I)

Personal responsibility was the first emergent theme in the narrative of MarsB that coincided with existing literature. Chonko (2003) argued that educators should convince the students in their classrooms to take complete responsibility for their education. Additionally, Loranger (1994) stated that students must have an active participation in their learning; the learner must initiate and control their learning process with supportive learning strategies provided by the instructor. Sierra (2011) argued that perceptions of shared responsibility for student learning are positively related to attitudinal, emotional, grade earned in the course, and behavioral responses toward the students' education experience. Sierra (2011), Chonko (2003) and Loranger (1994) all supported MarsB's emergent theme of individual personal responsibility in which the student is solely responsible for their individual learning. Heider (1944) suggested that personal responsibility begins from the relationship between the person and the act; this interaction "belongs together in a specially close way" (Heider, 1944, p. 201). MarsB applied this theme personal responsibility to all aspects of his life beyond the classroom.

MarsB firmly believed that students should be in charge of their learning; however, he does not ignore the responsibility of the teacher to make the subject manageable and interesting for the students.

I am scared of whole science stuff. I know and I can get it but as I said before Ms. Halasa did break things down into easier then harder.

Foote (2008, 2009, 2010) argued that supportive teachers who reach beyond the mathematics classroom into children's home and community changed the teachers from seeing the student's home environments as problematic to viewing the student's home environments as supportive. Furthermore, Battey and Chan (2010) stated the teachers who provided "attention to individual students, created environments that met individual students' specific needs, and supported different kinds of participation in relation to mathematics" (p. 142).

Levy, Brok, Wubbels, and Brekelmans (2003) argued that "African American males inferred significantly less leadership and helpful/friendly teacher behavior than other groups" (p. 25). Additionally, the African-American males are treated less favorably than their counterparts and viewed less positively by their teachers (Irvine, 1985, 1986; Simpson & Erickson, 1983). In contrast to literature, MarsB felt his teacher was too supportive and should have allowed students to struggle.

My AP Biology instructor was funny. She was very animated--animated! She made it seem like it was something interesting. She made it seem like she wanted to teach it to us and this is so exciting, you have to know this. You don't have to, but it's some stuff you should know.

I felt the independent study in A.P. Biology was more like what we do in college now. I felt Ms. Halasa should have let us drown a little a bit. I think I can say this because she is not teaching anymore. [Laughter]

Young (2005) argued that schools should provide experiences for students through “enthusiastic faculty, who provide high interaction, supportive feedback, and clear goals that emphasize learning over grades, will increase intrinsic motivation and the use of self-regulate learning strategies” (p. 25). Frumkin and Murphy (2007) argued that teachers need to be aware of their communication style as it has differential effects for their students by their gender and culture, and may in some cases more significantly impact upon student’s final grades.

MarsB stated science was the only subject that interested him in high school.

If you’re not interested, you are not going to pay attention no matter who the teacher is. I enjoy science. That’s like one of the best subjects you’ll have in school. Language Arts is boring. History is boring. Math is alright, but it’s still pretty boring. I slept many days in those classes. Science was the only classes I stayed awake in.

The more cognitively engaged the student’s experience is in the classroom the higher their actual daily performance gains (Young, 2005). Additionally, a student’s self-efficacy or sense of confidence influences the ability to perform specific tasks (Bresó, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2011; Hoshower & Chen, 2005; Lorschach & Jinks, 1999).

MarsB’s high self-efficacy coupled with his supportive family environment did not sustain his academic performance when entering high school.

I feel my family always knew that I was smart. Up until high school, I was on the honor roll, merit roll I and I had good grades and stuff. In high school, I just fell out because I’m tired. I was kind of burnt out. My whole family said, “Man, we know you’re smart.” I’ve heard that my whole life, “You’re smart. You got to apply yourself.”

The students with positive strong self-efficacy are more likely to persist more often at difficult or uninteresting academic tasks (Bresó, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2011; Hoshower & Chen, 2005; Pintrich & Groot, 1990). Therefore, the more cognitive

engagement the students experience in the classroom the more directly tied to actual performance gains in the day-to-day work of the classroom (Pintrich & Groot, 1990).

MarsB exhibited cognitive engagement, but his performance in the daily classroom activities decreased.

Oh yeah, I remember. MarsB doesn't do his homework. I don't like the daily things. Let's be real. It was boring. But I would always ace the tests. I'm a good test taker. Not to toot my own horn or anything. Wow, that is amazing. I don't even know how I got in the college with these grades.

I got a B in AP Biology and that is a college course. I recall how easy it was. All you had to do was your homework and study. It took me four years to learn that.

MarsB recognized that the ecological environment of friends is one influence on individuals, but he always returned to the emergent theme of personal responsibility. In the viewpoint of MarsB, he linked the personal responsibility with individual personal choice; people are responsible for themselves. MarsB did not hide his strength or weakness; instead, he embraced the intelligence of those around him.

I surrounded myself with more people who were on a track of different kinds of intelligence. They were smart in different kinds of ways and they all graduated. Yes, I did get influenced by them. Because out of all my friends, I had the worst grades and I had the hardest time in high school. I feel glad as far as school stuff goes because Science and Math were my strong subjects. That's what, I'm just like, that's my stuff. All my friends were good at different stuff. My one friend was good at Language Arts. I would say, "Man, I hate that class. That's so boring." There was some stuff that I could get into but not really. My other friend he was good at Economics, politics and History. My other friend he was good at sports. He got pretty decent grades.

High achieving Black students downplay or camouflage their high academic ability by acting as class clown, being involved in athletics, or doing just enough to get by (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). MarsB admitted he acted as a clown in high school.

They knew me, they knew who I was and they knew what I did. I was a clown in school. I am not going to lie. I didn't take high school seriously. I still don't take it seriously. It's high school. After I get out of high school, you can have the worst grades in the world and still get into college.

Acting White (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) was not a theme that surfaced for MarsB; instead, his classmates who were high achieving expressed animosity about who they perceived to be low achieving students in the course. "African American students are grossly underrepresented in the more advanced level science and mathematics course ..." (Russell & Atwater, 2005, p. 692) in contrast, the students who complete an honors curriculum are more likely to be enrolled in the advanced levels of curricular track programs (Darling-Hammond, 1995). MarsB experienced animosity from his classmates regarding his ability and admission into the Advanced Placement Biology course because he was perceived as a low achieving student. Many classmates would often question MarsB in the form of "What are you doing here?" Ironically, both informants, MarsB and Troy, questioned each other's intention of being enrolled in the course. Both Black and White high achieving students sometimes encounter forms of hostility from lower-achieving peers (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005). Tyson et al. (2005) failed to consider the opposite reaction occurring in classroom environments, where the lower-achieving students experience hostility from higher achieving peers.

Tyson et al. (2005) suggested that "experiencing and witnessing inequalities within schools may foster the type of animosity evidenced in the oppositional attitudes of teenagers toward school" (p. 583). MarsB stated similar sentiments in classroom setting.

All you have to do is go in there, sit, listen, and pay attention to what's going on. Right? Being in the environment of the class, what's going on in the curriculum might not even matter to you! Learning is part of your environment and you take in your environment. You could have a good group of people in

your class. Or you could be completely boring and sucking in class. If you have a good group of people in there who like actually like to make stuff fun, ask questions, because they're not afraid of, "Oh, somebody will think I'm dumb if I ask that."

Additionally, the animosity that MarsB held towards his classmates was reflected through the statements: "Oh, I'm in Honors. Like, I've been taking Honors courses since the sixth grade." The student grouping of clique and hierarchy among honor students track was prevalent in Advanced Placement Biology course. As MarsB entered his college courses, he began to reexamine his sentiments of high achieving scores. He acknowledged the need to accomplish that same high GPA in college that he mocked in smart high school cliques.

I am excited about college starting. I have all these dreams and goals for college. It is pipe dream to me and I know I can do it. I am the kind person that knows stuff takes a lot of work. I am more than willing to do the work. Before I start doing the work, I will get started on the work I shouldn't do this. I am taking my freshman class my pre-req. When graduate I want to be valedictorian and get all the crazy awards and honor society. I know I can!

MarsB's decisions to construct his own academic path developed with the goal of becoming a role model for other family members.

I feel that I needed to meet everybody's expectations. I don't have to but I made them proud of me. They'll be proud of me regardless of what I do but I don't feel I should let them down. I'm actually not the oldest of the grandkids on either side. I'm actually the second oldest of the grandkids on both sides of my family as far as grandchildren goes.

The ones ahead of me kind dropped the ball a little bit. It is important for me to be a role model for the rest of the younger ones. Because this one's f'ing up and so is this one. I'm trying to show them they don't have to. I said to my brother, he's only three years younger than me, that he has his mind to go as far as he's wants to do or whatever he feels like doing in life. But, I know my younger sister; she's seventeen, she looks up to me. I see it all the time. She loves her brother. I feel like I need to set an example for her.

Role modeling is common practice in family, general academics, and society at large (Huddley, 1992; Philip & Morgan, 1993; Uslabar, 1992; White-Hood, 1993). Numerous intervention models incorporate African American role models in the fields of mathematics and science-related fields (Barisa & Holland, 1993; Berrington & Delacy, 1993; Tobias, 1992); however, there is a lack of empirical research connecting these role models to students pursuing a career in either field (Hall & Post-Kammer, 1987; Lewis, 2003). Furthermore, the role model is viewed as a socializer and is defined as “a person or group of people that serve to shape, direct, and define the social world of students either directly or indirectly” (Thompson & Lewis, 2005, p. 14).

The second emergent theme for MarsB was the notion of a scientist. MarsB expressed excitement about the opportunity to continue the study of science, a subject he loves; however, he had no concept of the daily practices of a scientist. MarsB did not have passive socializers to provide a vision of what he can be and achieve in a social world as a scientist or in the field of science (Thompson & Lewis, 2005). As a result, African American students represent a smaller percentage of scientists, mathematicians, and engineers (Atwater, 2000; Graham, 1997; Hill, 2001; Hines, 1997; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). Scientists are often portrayed as White elderly-aged males working in a laboratory (Turkmen, 2008).

I know you go to school to become scientist but what do scientist do per se.

I have no idea what scientists do! I know chemist works with fuels and stuff like that and biologist work in labs with disease. What do they do? Have no idea. I see all these building but what do they do. I see polymer research buildings. Is that where scientist work . . . is that where they do research like the polymer science labs? All scientists have one thing in common which is they all study . . . therefore they perform research . . . they are researchers. I thought they

all worked in labs wearing lab coats and cooking up something. I had no idea what they do. You know when you see them on TV, the scientist are in labs cooking up diseases such as Outbreak and Jurassic Park. My context of scientists comes from the movies I have seen. I have not met a scientist. Wait! I have met scientists in the Air Force. The chemist I know is a White woman who is fuel developer. She is the first one. I have never seen Black scientist. I have seen Black doctors but few. I have seen Black woman as nurses. Unless you consider drug dealer a chemist. Movies are what made me want to be scientist.

MarsB recognized the impact of image socializers including movies and television on the development of the scientific world. These image socializers establish an image to which an individual can attach a value claim (Thompson & Lewis, 2005).

The third emergent theme of MarsB was the belief that the issue of race is not an obstacle to overcome in life; however, gender is relevant. MarsB's beliefs on gender aligned with the traditional stereotyping of women that must overcome greater authority resistance than their male counterparts to effectively exert influence (Carli, 2001).

MarsB's narrative stated that gender was a greater obstacle than the issue of race.

Well, I'm Black, and you know, that presents an obstacle for me. There are obstacles in life. I know females out there who have kids and they're in school, and they don't have a boyfriend, they don't have a husband, and they're living with their parents. They are still going to school. I think it would be harder for a female than a Black male despite, whether you are a White female or a Black female. "Oh, you're a girl, you can't do this, or you can't do that." So, you know what I'm saying?

The notion of gender differences was argued in the existing literature. DiMaggio (1982) argued that daughters of women whose fathers were college graduates had the largest cultural capital gains than compared to males. During the 1990s research discovered that boys were called on more often in middle school classrooms than girls; the test scores of science and math were lower for girls when compared to boys; the boys dominated the participation in athletics; and the girls' self-esteem dropped during their middle to high

school years (AAUW, 1992). Traditionally, girls out-performed boys in reading and writing while struggling in the subjects of math and science; however, other studies have indicated girls are closing the achievement gap in the fields of math and science (Conlin, 2003; Mead, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

Additionally, the gender differences that appeared in science classrooms with girls are usually due to their inexperience with science activities that are familiar to boys (Erickson & Erickson, 1984; Jones, Mullis, Raizen, Weiss, & Weston, 1992; Kahle & Lakes, 1983). As a result, the girls' confidence to learn science is undermined with their limited exposure to science activities (Dweck, 1986; Parsons, Meece, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982) and provides a different classroom experience for girls (Good & Stipek, 1983; Johnson & Murphy, 1984). These preconceived notions of gender experiences influence the teacher's ability to call on or to respond to their male and female students differently and perpetrate these stereotypes (Morse & Handley, 1985; Shepardson & Pizzini, 1992).

In contrast to MarsB's belief, the research demonstrated that African American females are out-performing their African American male counterparts in academic performance (Ford, 1992; Hrabowski, Maton, Greene, & Greif, 2002; Sanders, 1998). According to the National Science Foundation (2006), African Americans earned 8.3% of the awarded bachelor's degrees in science and engineering. Of those degrees awarded, African American males earned 6.1%, while African American women obtained 10.5% of the bachelor's degrees earned. African American males are experiencing high dropout rates, lower standardized test scores, lower participation in nonathletic extracurricular activities, lower enrollment in both advanced placement courses and rigorous curriculum than their White counterparts or Black females (Shaffer, Ortman, & Denbo, 2002).

Despite MarsB's perception on race, MarsB indicated race being an issue later when it came to the cheating ring.

They were caught cheating. We all just happened to be sitting in the same area. Troy and I were interviewed [by] Ms. Halasa. My guess [was] that she thought we were somehow caught up in that because we sat in front of the other two. They were caught cheating and she asked us if we knew anything about it. I didn't know they were cheating. I was shocked and angry that Halasa thought I was cheating because I think she asked us because we were Black. [Laughter]

MarsB indicated earlier that his teacher was supportive; however, his aforementioned comment "...because we were Black" with laughter revealed the notion that is widely circulated as a popular belief that African American males are alienated and accused easily of misfortunes (Fultz & Brown, 2008). MarsB responded to the incident as a racial encounter and echoed his perceived animosity stemming from his classmates as they viewed he should not be in the course. MarsB's societal view of racial identity (Carter, 1995, Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990) appeared in the cheating ring incident that reflected from his socialization and experience of racism in his community (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). These beliefs are amplified and proliferated through popular media (Kelly, 1997). Fultz and Brown (2008) outlined movies, magazines, and autobiographies that perpetuated the mid-1990s theme that African American males were young and endangered (Anderson, 1990; Majors & Billson, 1992; Wilson, 1987). Movies such as *Boyz in the Hood* (1991), *South Central* (1992), and *Menace II Society* (1993) depicted African American males as trapped within urban subcultures of gangs, drugs, criminal activity, and violence. Furthermore, it was not uncommon in both the 1980s and 1990s for Black magazines such as *Ebony* and *Essence* to highlight these issues with titles such as "Is the Black Male an Endangered Species?" "Our Men in Crisis," and "Manchild of

the 80s” (Bailey, 1983; Leavy, 1983; Strickland, 1989). Nathan McCall’s (1994) autobiography, *Makes Me Wanna Holla*, and Elijah E. Anderson’s (1990) urban ethnography, *Streetwise*, also reinforced already widely circulated narratives of angry, alienated African American males (p. 855).

Discussion of Emergent Themes of Zack (Cohort I)

The value of education was the first emergent theme found in Zack’s narrative. African American males’ plight is depicted with highest school failure; more likely to be identified as a special education student; with the highest suspension and expulsion rates; and is more likely involved with numerous violent incidents (Ferguson, 2000; Polite & Davis, 1999). Furthermore, the curriculum for African American males begins to diminish as early as kindergarten and continues throughout their postsecondary years (Parham & McDavis, 1987). The declining curriculum for African American males contributed to the 44% of all African American males who are functionally illiterate (Blake & Darling, 1994). The educational investment in African American males will not yield the same results as their White male counterparts (Staples, 1987). These negative school experiences were not reflected in Zack’s own meso-school environment; however, Zack did question the value of education as one of his emergent themes that defined his choices in regards to his life and educational journey. He did not value enrolling in rigorous courses because the same diploma is offered with non-honors and advanced courses.

Prior to enrolling in the A.P. Biology course, I did not really hear much about the class. I had heard Advance Placement classes [were] more difficult. I just wanted to take it just for the simple fact that I guess I could. I always wanted to take the easy way out in past. I just didn’t see the point of making it more

difficult for myself. I was graduating along with others. Exactly! What's the point of taking challenging classes? [Laughter] I can still graduate.

Zack's attitude toward educational value was echoed as one of the characteristics of high achieving males who are doing just enough to get by in their academic performance (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Zack portrayed himself as a person whose primary motivation for attending school, in particular his senior year, was his interest in girls and participation in sports. Zack exhibited the cool pose, swag which emphasized the style and acting of cool to appear suave, urbane and charming while elevating his pride and control (Majors & Billson, 1992).

I recall that when I was a senior in high school I thought more about girls and athletics than my grades. It is more about the social status . . . in the senior year. [Laughter] As a senior, it is everything about you, your friends, and your swag [way you do things and hold yourself].

Zack devalued education placing a greater emphasis on maintaining his swag. Coleman et al. (1966) concurred high school students are not concerned with learning and academic achievement; instead, focusing on looking good and being popular were the top concerns of teenagers. In contrast to Coleman et al. (1966), Zack did recognize the importance of school and higher education for the advancement of career. Zack wanted to secure the ability for his siblings to finish their education while postponing his own pursuit of higher education. The financial burden associated with obtaining a higher education was a great concern for Zack.

Next year. I believe everyone else will get settled in my family.

Oh, I think everyone should get their education and there is a lot we all don't know . . . I don't think you can ever be educated enough.

The one thing I don't like about the schools is [that they are] far too expensive. . . . Lot people do not understand that . . . It's crazy. It's a lot of

money. I can only imagine what happens when you have to pay them back and I don't want to be in that kind of predicament...

He defined learning as an ongoing process beyond the classroom doors to everyday life and career.

The influence of relationships and interactions with teachers, friends, family, and coaches was the second emergent theme that surfaced with Zack. These relationships impacted Zack's decisions in life by influencing his acceptance of responsibility, the development of integrity, and the direction of his educational choices. Social supports from parents and teachers have been associated with higher grade point averages and other favorable educational outcomes for adolescent African Americans (Fisher, 2000; Forsbach, Yanowitz, & Fiala, 2002; Haycock, 2001; Hrabowski, Maton, Greene, & Grief, 1998; McClendon, Nettles, & Wigfield, 2000). Zack felt that teachers and coaches need to illustrate genuine empathy and provide original ideas.

I can say that Ms. Halasa cared, I really can and it is not just because I'm sitting here with her. I mean you can tell there were a handful of teachers that really cared about our future. They really did. You can really tell. I don't know how to describe it.

Studies have demonstrated that coaches have taught or influenced personal values and skills to their athletes (Gilbert, Gilbert, & Trudel, 2001a, 2001b; McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000).

My coach is the best. I don't know how to describe him. [Laughter] Yes, it was Ralph O'Hare, of course. That dude, man he . . . [Laughter] I like him a lot. Ralph really helped me out a lot. I never got hurt or even fell. Whenever I wasn't putting much effort into it as much as I needed to, he would be there for me. He really would be there.

Yes, sports were huge for me. Sports helped me develop team work skills and it helped me develop a sense of not being alone. I always had teammates around. Track, by far helped me out a lot. I think track helped me out the most.

A lot of people think that track is an individual sport because there are so many events that stand out in track but it's not. Track is probably the most team dedicated sport there probably is. When I came up in track we probably had about 60 people. We had so many people!

Therefore, it is really competitive. Sometimes I would be fighting just to come in third, just to get one point. Just to get us something on the board. Man it was really, I really liked track. I really did!

Zack's development of integrity through participation and involvement with sports

transferred to all facets of his life.

[T]he one reason I can never cheat is cheaters never amount to anything [b]ecause they don't think . . . and it's never gonna work. . . . R]emember that everyone struggles. I mean the next person can be just as wrong, . . . you're better off thinking for yourself.

I'm the kind of person [who] will not just settle for something, I'm not gonna settle for less. If I know that I'm not making the kind of money I should be, then I won't stay. Or if I know there not treating me with the proper respect or the way I should . . . be treated then I'm out.

Hartmann (2003) argued that sports are considered traditional and idealistic experiences for self-discipline and character building. Through the participation in sports, the students develop good citizenship, receive positive recognition and learning experiences (NFHS Mission Statement, 2001). Previous research has articulated the importance of sports for a student each emphasizing a different approach. DeBusk and Hellison (1989) argued for the self-responsibility model; Martinek and Hellison (1997) emphasized self esteem and resiliency; and Danish (2002), Danish, Petipas, and Hale (1993), and Danish and Nellen (1997) outlined the development of life skills. Chavis (2011) stated that sports reduced suspension rates and demanded academic eligibility requirements; therefore, students were motivated to stay in school to play sports. Eitle and Eitle (2002)

implied that extensive sports participation for African American males may supplant the need for educational attainment.

The issue of race was not an emergent theme for Zack. He believed the world has expanded the opportunities for African American people. Zack did not believe in the stereotypes of African American males being endangered, uneducable, dysfunctional, and dangerous (Gibbs, 1988; Majors & Billson, 1992; Parham & McDavis, 1987).

However, I have not experienced any of those kinds of things in my life personally. No, no, I don't think . . . Ms. Halasa challenged [because of my] ethnic background. When she challenged me, she was challenging me as a person and I was never challenged like that before. . . . I think African-American[s] in general have pretty much passed all our limitations, all of us have. I feel we have done a lot. I do not think we should not be challenged. There's no reason why they should try to challenge us. I believe we can do it. Therefore, I believe opportunities have already been given to everyone in one way or another.

Zack recognized that his educational career was not challenged until his enrollment in the Advanced Placement Biology course. Corra, Carter, and Carter (2011) demonstrated that capable Black students who might be expected to enroll in advanced courses are instead taking less-challenging courses. Zack did not feel that race was a deterrent to his enrollment into rigorous courses during his high school career. In stark contrast to the previously cited literature, African Americans are less often represented or participants in honors courses (Haycock, 2001; Wynn, 2007). This feeling among African Americans has been coined by Franklin (1993) as a sixth sense, by which "African-American men uniformly report difficulty in securing a taxi on a city street corner but can differ in their beliefs about the extent to which racism played a part in these incidents" (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000, p. 34). In the school environment, this sixth sense is reinforced through various disciplinary incidents whereby African American males outnumber their

White male counterparts in suspension and expulsion rates at all levels of education (Bailey, 1996; Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1990; Federal Report, 1999; Ford, Grantham, & Bailey, 1999; Lee, 1992; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Trescott, 1990). As a result, many African American males begin to disengage from the classroom, developing negative behaviors that reinforce stereotypes reflected in both the literature and society (Bailey & Moore, 2004; Moore, 2000; Moore & Herndon, 2003).

Discussion of Emergent Themes of Troy (Cohort I)

The first emergent theme from Troy's narrative was the influence of relationships with teachers, his mother, and coaches that shaped Troy's life and educational journey. The relationship with Ms. Halasa, the teacher, influenced Troy's choice to enroll in the Advanced Placement course. Troy was comfortable with Ms. Halasa's style of teaching and her willingness to support and value her students.

Like I mentioned earlier, I knew I was going back to Ms Halasa's style of teaching. I know a teacher can teach me because Ms. Halasa was interesting. I barely went to sleep in her class. I did all this, especially when I had her class after lunch. [Laughter] I had her after lunch then I [went] to track. I would have track meet the next day and I'd come back to . . . class, still loving it. I mean you [talking to Ms Halasa] got my attention. I'm learning.

In contrast to Troy's experience, a growing body of evidence confirms that African American adolescent males report lower levels of teacher support than their female counterparts; additionally, the minimal support that African American male adolescents receive has a greater impact on behavior than their female counterparts (Fisher, 2000; Mickelson & Greene, 2006).

Troy's parents separated when he was four years old, and his mother became the most influential figure in his life. Their relationship kept Troy focused on academics, providing the motivation to graduate from high school and seek higher education.

Obviously my mom talked to me at 12 and said "Hey you know here's the deal." Then she went back to college, and in the back of my mind, [I thought to myself,] "Hey, I'm gonna beat you in the long run." My mom and I have this relationship that I care about what she thinks of me.

I would have been the first to go college. My mother went back to college when I was in the 12th grade. I would have been the first but she graduated with a Bachelor's in Business, I think.

That's the reason I'm still in school cause I wanted to get the Bachelor's Degree. I'll probably go afterward to grad school when I graduate. You know what I'm saying just have one step on her [mom]. [Laughter] I'm challenging her but I do not tell her that. It's all in my head. Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

Despite the lack of a prominent male figure in the lives of African American males who live with single-mother-headed-households, they do not experience lower developmental outcomes than other family structures (Battle, 1999; Battle & Scott, 2006; Zullig, Valois, Huebner, & Drane, 2005).

The physical education teacher and the coaches encouraged Troy to become active in sports during his sophomore year in high school. Troy's participation in sports developed a new positive environment with supportive teammates. The positive impact of the team environment provided Troy a support network.

It was the coaches. I'd say Tim and Ralph O'Hare cause they would inspire just not to have me on the team. I mean you could tell like they were grateful to have me. Kids doing other things but as a team they teach the values of what a team is. I didn't know none of them. I played football when I was younger; but it wasn't like it was in high school. You know the whole team values, you know they care. [Laughter]

The poor academic and social performance of African American male adolescents have been linked to the lack of role models, low self-esteem, feelings of hopelessness, and low expectations placed on them by the school, communities, and society at-large (Gardner, 1985; Kunjufu, 1984; Lee, 1996; Lee & Bailey, 1997; Lee & Lindsey, 1985; Majors, 1986; Majors & Billson, 1992; Morgan, 1980).

The second emergent theme from Troy's narrative was the portrayal of an image that reflected the ecological environment of his neighborhood. His mother, coaches, and physical education teacher influenced him to be on track to graduate and out of the legal system although Troy still had an image he wanted to portray which defined his masculinity, influenced his dress code, and his interaction with girls.

I don't know. . . . I think that's the assumption that most people think. It's just the white tees, just the white tees and the baggy stuff. Like most people don't walk near you if you do have baggy clothes. Most of them have probably pictures on their shirts and a rubber band on my arm is significant for selling things...

Most people that sell drugs wear a rubber band on their arm. I mean, I just wear it just to wear it. I just wear the rubber band and put it on my arm, I mean I just pick up a rubber band and throw it on my arm. I mean I just seem so it's probably just habit now.

“Ritualized expressions of masculinity among young African American males are often viewed as ‘oppositional’ to the culture of school” (Wright, 2011a, p. 615). These rituals extended into all aspects of the African-American masculinity which included life, manner of speaking, dress code, and interaction among themselves. Ritual examples as provided by Tatum (2005) included wearing beltless pants hanging below the waist, signifying and rapping, high fives, special handshakes, and forms of greeting. Troy was aware of his environment and its accepted norms. Despite Troy's desire to not become

part of the streets lifestyle, he was uncomfortable with areas he did not frequent or were outside of his neighborhood environment.

No, No. I didn't feel uncomfortable, I just felt out of place maybe [At Panera]. I wasn't uncomfortable. I was just out of place.

Dubois and Hirsch (1990) stated that Black junior high students are more likely to have a network with neighborhood friends than their White counterparts. Berg and Medrich (1980) argued that the social interaction is more likely to occur in low-income neighborhoods than high-income neighborhoods. Troy believed that the ecological environment influences the choices made by young people. The simple location of the neighborhood influenced an individual's dress code and accepted behavior.

I mean he wasn't a friend, but we had mutual friends so we were still cool. We just [weren't] close cause he was from the bottom [of the Hill] and I was on the top. And that does make a difference in the Hill. It really does matter where you live. Cause it[']s just the people you keep around. You have an understanding how things operate here, and then how things operate over there. Just like the way you act; what was the in-thing, you know, the kind of shoes you're wearing from what you wear these up here to what you wear down there. We don't wear them, so we can tell a person's not from around your neighborhood; you don't live here and talk like me.

The street life, the money from drug dealing and the gang-related activity that developed into a jail mindset were strong ecological influences in the life of Troy. Troy's observations and conclusions about the long lasting negative effects of incarceration did develop individuals with a negative outlook upon societal norms.

My friends were going in a different direction than I was. They totally "skipped." I mean they dropped out of school. [Of] all my friends that I hung with the first couple years, I'm the only person that graduated [Laughter] from the entire group. I would say that's probably 12 maybe 13 people. I don't know why they did not. They [weren't] motivated, I think. They had their minds on other things, like what everybody was doing in the neighborhood at the time.

Stewart, Stewart, and Simons (2007) stated that concentrated neighborhoods of disadvantaged students exerted a significant influence on college aspirations. Jargowsky and Komi (2008) suggested that neighborhoods shape the school achievement both by direct mechanism and indirectly through shaping the school environmental. Outcomes of positive student academic achievement and occupational attainment are influenced by the individual student's aspirations (Campbell, 1983; Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1992; Hill, Castellino et al., 2004; Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969).

The transition to high school presents a more difficult set of challenges for many minorities. African American low-income students are susceptible to declines in academic motivation and performance during the transition to the ninth grade and may not recover in the subsequent years of high school (Eccles, 1994). As African American males progress through their education, research has found that they liked school less, their grades dropped, and they were more likely to experience behavior problems (Simmons, Black, & Zhou, 1991). During the freshman to sophomore year, the ecological environment of Troy's neighborhood influenced his friends to disengage from the school environment.

My friends started goofing around obviously during freshman and sophomore year. [I]t did not start in middle school or elementary school.... [Then] we were always getting in trouble, getting bad grades and all that [but] you gotta be in the house—[m]y mom being everything and never staying late in school. By that time we got to high school they [my friends were] making money. They really don't care about their parents telling you to come in the house at 12. "I can't come in the house at 12, if I got more money to make."

The life style of selling drugs led to quick cash for many young people in Troy's neighborhood. Troy did not believe that the ends justify the means, negative actions

cannot be justified by their intent. Troy did state he participated in gang activity which was prominent throughout the city. Troy's 13 friends from high school were involved with gangs; however, according to Troy, they did not view themselves as violent gang members for life. Except for Troy, all members of the gang did not graduate from high school which led them to a life of crime. Troy attempted to influence his friends with positive peer pressure but ultimately was not successful.

I did said it but that's peer pressure. It is another form of peer pressure. They think when you say peer pressure you're already thinking negative but there is positive peer pressure. I could go up to you and say like, "Man, you do not have to do this." I did go to one of my friends. He said "I ain't gotta do nothing," he showed me like he had at least \$7,000-\$8,000 in his hand at one time, and I was like alright. Then probably two weeks later he was in jail. I mean you gotta show them this thing is not what's everything is about.

The third emergent theme for Troy's narrative was benefits and skills acquired from the enrollment in the Advanced Biology course. The course prepared him for college by developing study habits and time management skills. Troy recognized that science courses prior to AP Biology were slow paced and did not prepare him for the rigorous pace of college.

When I look back after taking the A.P. course, the things now that I experienced in college it helped me. I'm happy I took it because of college prep. I did not have any experience in college at the time. I just wanted to see . . . what would it be like to go into college better than just going into college not knowing what to expect. So, I believe the course helped me.

I remember saying to Ms. Halasa, "Your class was harder than college." [Laughter] It was harder than college. The A.P. courses were sure harder than college cause I don't believe that college is that hard.

A rigorous secondary curriculum decreases the number of remedial courses from 21% to 3% (Warburton, Bugarin, & Nuñez, 2001). Warburton et al. (2001) stated the more rigorous the student's high school curriculum, the more often the student will be on track

to a bachelor's degree: 87% of students who took rigorous academic coursework in high school stayed on the college bound track, compared with 62% of students who did not take such coursework. The students who obtained a rigorous curriculum in high school were still enrolled and working toward a degree than students who did not exceed the core New Basics requirements (93% vs. 75%) (Warburton et al., 2001). The New Basic requirement curriculum includes four years of English, three years of mathematics, and three years of science and social studies (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996).

African American adolescents have placed high value upon education, understanding the upward social and economic mobility it provides (Anderson, 1988; Harris, 2008; Hochschild, 1996; Howard, 2003; Marable, 2000; Mickelson, 1990; Rowley, 2000). However, African American students are not able to obtain the same result from the American educational system as their counterparts (Mickelson, 1990; Smith-Maddox, 1999). Matthew (2011) stated that “blacks believed that they can effect some positive change by performing well in school, but not enough to be optimistic about situations for which their success can only be the result of being granted opportunities” (p. 243). The performances on standardized tests scores for African American students are lower than that of their White and Asian American counterparts (Jencks & Phillips, 1998, 2000; Kao, Tienda, & Schneider, 1996; Miller, 1995). Wang and Mirski (2010) suggested that differences in school structure between elementary and middle school play a role in determining motivation and academic success for Black students in high school.

Race was not a prominent issue for Troy. He did recognize that race was an issue in his ecological environment and the world at large. Holcomb-McCoy (2011) stated that

Black students are often exposed to both blatant and subtle racial stereotyping. Troy's concept of race was formed by several experiences: (1) the episode of cheating in class, (2) an observation of the race community business leaders, (3) the belief that interracial dating has legal consequences, (4) the White neighbor's sense of security, and (5) the election of a Black president, Mr. Barack Obama.

I thought until 12th grade that a Black man would go to jail if he dated a White woman. No one told me when I was young not to. Only my cousin George dated out of race.

Discussion of Overlapping Emergent Themes in Cohort I

The overall emergent theme for Cohort I was the relationship with their mothers of all three informants which played a pivotal role in their lives. Battle (1999) and Battle and Scott (2006) found that African American males in mother-only households scored better on standardized math and reading tests than those in father-only households. Furthermore, when examining the socioeconomic status, the outcome of test scores remained the same which implied that economic status is less significant than family configuration. The potential for African-American males to succeed socially and academically is dependent on the availability of the effective resources coupled with strengths of their families support. Battle and Scott (2006) further stated that mother-only households sought resources for their academic activities, asked assistance from teachers or community members, and utilized their supportive networks for their sons' development. The Cohort I mothers were the support system for these informants to achieve academic accomplishments.

The informants' fathers were present in their lives, but their mothers played a more significant role in their life choices. African American male children require an authoritative parent who provides warmth and love while also maintaining authority (Mandara, 2006; Todson, 2008; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 1996). All three informants have some type of relationship with their fathers. MarsB recognized his personality is similar to his mother and stated that he does have a relationship with his father.

My dad and I are cool but I always lived with my mom. My dad and I are real good. I act like my mom and I think that is why her and I do not get along. We are more alike then she would admit and that is why I am so loud

Zack recognizes the importance of having a relationship with his father. Kanc (2000) described that fathers provide not only the support for their child, but fathers teach their children about "family kinship networks." Zack recognized that single mother-households are difficult for most families. Roberts (2010) and Edin, Tach, and Mincy (2009) suggested the idea that fatherhood outside of marriage has been institutionalized in the African American community.

My relationship with my father is good. Always! Definitely! African-American males may not have a good relationship with their father. A lot of people don't have one. I personally have a good relationship with my father. I think my dad holds together a positive role model to me and influence to me. He is someone to look up to. I am a male child and I need a male role model.

I think most African-American males do have relationships with their fathers. Fortunately, I would think they might. I don't know. I can't tell from friends. But then again it's always that strong mother type that if the mother is responsible she can do both the positive role model and the authority. I believe probably everything will be okay. I think not having that male figure then means the mother had to work that much harder constantly. If you don't have a father, then you have a one income household. It is more work for the mother.

Troy has a relationship with his father which influenced his own beliefs of being a father.

My relationship with my father is [that] we got close in our older years. He was around [during] my younger years. I just didn't want to be around him. It was just boring at his house. He lived in Riverline Park but I live on top of the Hill at the time. I didn't know anybody around there [his neighborhood]. It's like going to a new school for the first time. Every time you go out here's another one. I didn't know none of them. I don't care to know anybody down there. He was older. Some of my interests are not the same as his interests. I would play video games all day. He don't even have a video game. I just didn't stay around there listening to oldies and all that kind of stuff. I can appreciate now that I'm older cause I gotta kind of like listen to old music now because of him. Now, I can see when my kids come around I gotta have them just don't let them think the same of me when I went over there. Just have something around that they can play with and interact with them.

He didn't play personally with me. He would tell me his track stories. My father ran track too for Southview High. Every time I see him that's another reason I ran track. Then he started coming to my games till probably the 12th grade year. I finally got the support from him and everything.

It was like my mom supported me when I was in football she came. But she had to work many hours [during] the track seasons. So my dad would come to the track meet and it just felt good having somebody there. I'm gonna do the same for my kids having that presence there too felt good. Being part of their lives is important.

Both Troy and MarsB are fathers and realize the importance of being a part of their children's lives. Hamer (1997) stated six categories that are the functions and roles that African American fathers have when interacting with their children: (1) spend time with children, (2) provide emotional support, (3) provide discipline, (4) be a role model (5) teach boys to be men and girls to be young ladies, and (6) provide economic support.

MarsB stated:

I have a daughter and she is four years old. Being a father is cool sometimes. Being a parent is hard, but not as hard as people make it seem. That's another thing that I feel that people use as a crutch and an excuse for not

giving their hundred percent. You can do whatever you want to do. You just have to overcome your obstacles. You have to want to do stuff.

Troy believed education is pivotal and vital part of preparing his children for life.

I am going to emphasize education to them. They are gonna go to school. I mean the same way it was taught to me. I will sit them down and watch the crowd of people, you wait see. You're going to jail. I mean if you do dirty, you're going to jail. Because of my criminal justice background is easiest for me to describe to someone. I do this for a living. I had already seen and did everything you had done, so just stay in school and school will help you out. Education will help you out.

Introduction of Cohort II

The informants in Cohort II consisted of D.Will, Roy, and Cupid. The researcher did not need to motivate Cohort II informants to enroll in the Advanced Placement Biology course; rather, the school improvement plan served as the active socializer enrolling the students in the course (Thompson & Lewis, 2005). The overlapping emergent themes from Cohort II informants illustrated that the Advanced Placement Biology course provided an easier transition into college curriculum. The emergent themes of D.Will were (1) the influence of relationships and interactions, (2) the individual personal effort, and (3) the issue of race in relation to larger social and political ecological environments. The emergent themes of Roy were (1) the individual responsibility, (2) the recognition of internal satisfaction, and (3) the issue of race issues in the larger social and political ecological environments. The emergent themes of Cupid were (1) the role of portraying a hero, (2) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits, and (3) the issue of race prevalent in both his personal and public life.

Discussion of Emergent Themes of D.Will (Cohort II)

An influence of relationships with teachers, friends, family, and God was one of the emergent themes that surfaced with D.Will and guided his choices about life and education. Despite the lack of family structure, D.Will maintained resilience by adjusting to his ecological family environment and found the chaos to be a source of motivation.

My main motivation was I knew that my mom dropped out in the sixth grade and I still never met my dad but he graduated high school. He graduated from the same high school I did and took some courses for college. At that same point in time, my uncles didn't graduate and my aunt who raised me dropped out in the 10th grade. It was like okay they didn't have [any] motivation. Therefore, I made them my motivation.

“Drawing out and affirming family strengths in the midst of difficulties helps to counter a sense of helplessness, failure, and despair as it reinforces pride, confidence, and a ‘can-do’ spirit” (Walsh, 2002, p. 6). Walsh (1998) suggested that being resilient is more than surviving and being a victim for life, furthermore the individual is able to heal and be empowered to live life. Genero (1998) argued that resilience is beyond an individual characteristic; instead, resilience is a relational issue.

D.Will valued his relationships with his siblings, and strived to maintain those relationships. D.Will struggled to maintain some a type of a family structure with his siblings. The relationships among siblings provide one of the most stable and powerful developmental contexts for the transmission of both prosocial and antisocial behavior because sibling relationships are a source of support and skill development which build competence in self-regulation and emotional understanding (Stormshak, Bullock, & Falkenstein, 2009). The quality of relationship among African American siblings is

important because of the given degree to which siblings can serve as sources of mutual support across the life span (Brody, Stoneman, Smith, & Gibson, 1999).

All my siblings never been under the same roof at the same time. I'm the type of person [who] wears my heart on my sleeve. I have a feeling that my older brothers and sisters do not care if we are all close or together.

D.Will depended on his relationship with God and faith to overcome the obstacles that his family experienced. The church has been a potential community-level source of protective factors and positive influence for adults attending school (Brown & Gary, 1991; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). A positive relationship between participation in school, community, and church activities and student achievement has increased their academic performance (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Irvin, Farmer, Leung, Thompson, & Hutchins, 2010; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002; Regnerus & Elder, 2003). The church promotes resilience through nurturing of spirituality among its members (Haight, 1998; Hill-Lubin, 1991). Spirituality is defined as the acceptance of nonmaterial higher force that pervades all of life affairs and is identified as a common cultural value among African American people (Boykin, 1994; Schiele, 1996). The spirituality among African Americans is a key factor in coping with stressful events in their lives (Hale-Benson, 1987). Historically, the Black Church is an institutional that has been a stronghold in the African American community that sustained a cultural ethos that enabled African Americans to combat racial prejudice and hostility for generations (Foster, 2009; Quarles, 1987; Randolph, 2009).

The influence of friends for D.Will was more significant on choices of academic courses in which he enrolled during high school. Additionally, D.Will's friends served as the primary catalyst for his attending the university after high school graduation.

Eventually, he dropped out of college, due to the negative influence of another friend who was not attending the university. “Overall, the frequent mismatch between the African American peer culture inside the school and that outside the school created dilemmas for some student” (Datnow & Cooper, 1997, p. 71).

The second time around I decided to pick the math class in the afternoon at 1:10. However, my friend Rayiana came home and we began to smoke and drink and I just felt school was not my priority.

African American male students have a 1 in 12 chance of graduating from college, but a 1 in 4 chance of becoming a dropout statistic from high school (Trescott, 1990). D.Will defeated the odds of high school graduation and enrolled into college. Relative to college enrollment, African American males only account for 6.3% of the total college and university enrollment in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009). D.Will’s motivational drive from his family’s lack of formal education only sustained him to graduate from high school but was not enough motivation to complete a university degree. African American students are leaving the universities and colleges at a disproportionate rate compared to their White counterparts without completing their baccalaureate degree programs (Green, 2001; Jones, 2001). Due to lack of exposure and experience in higher education, the African American students could experience culture shock with regard to the faculty, the lack of diversity, and the rigorous pace of the curriculum expected (Swail, 2006).

D.Will believed a teacher’s understanding of their students needs is a crucial component of conducting a successful classroom. Furthermore, D.Will argued that the relationship with the teacher is not based on the like factor alone but the structured environment in which the teacher commands control. D.Will stated that teachers who

understand their content and have the ability to convey their subject matter, science knowledge, maintain student interest and engagement in the course. Despite the Coleman Reports (1966) claims that there is no hope for poverty and minority students stricken schools, the teachers “really *do* make a difference” in their students’ academic success (Haycock, 1998, p. 2).

D.Will identified personal effort as the second emergent theme; therefore, an individual must put forth effort to advance himself. Education was the key factor in the pursuit of happiness and financial security; however, education can only be obtained through individual effort. D.Will expressed that the Advanced Placement courses prepared him for the college rigor, and he was not afraid to connect with the professors in college. Work ethics is what he believed is the thread of learning and understanding the knowledge presented in his college courses because the professor presented the material, but the individual students must put forth effort to learn it. One of the most critical factors in academic persistence was participation in advanced science and mathematics courses as part of high school college preparatory program (Russell & Atwater, 2005). D.Will constantly referred to the rigor of the A.P. Biology and A.P. European History courses which prepared him for college.

I mentioned before this course was preparing me for college. Reflecting back, this course helped me for my first year of college. Both the A.P. Biology and A.P. European [History] came in hand-in-hand with me because the courses were constant work of taking notes, asking questions and raising your hand. I was not scared to talk to my professor or teacher because of the experience in these classes. When I got to college and I started to take the courses, [and] I began to reflect back on those A.P. classes. ...I really believe that these classes did prepare us for college. At least it did prepare me personally for college because of the type of work we always had in college. Nothing in college is handed to you.

The issue of racism was not an overt emergent theme; however, D. Will alluded to the larger social and political race issues. D. Will's ecological family environment consisted of large numbers of male members not being employed or educated. He placed the responsibility on the male family members' lack of effort.

It was their choice. The economy is slow, but at the same point in time how do you know that the economy is slow if you're not willing to try the economy. You are not out here trying to get a job. You are not out here trying to go to school. How can [you] tell me anything if you're not trying or even dealing with it? Their upbringing causes them to try to live the fast life and not understand... education [God] ... [those] what's important right now.

D. Will's statement contradicts the findings addressed below that:

African Americans' unequal access to and facilities for formal education, the poor quality of schooling available to large numbers of African American students, the cultural differences between most of these students and their teachers, the inadequate home and family support they receive for academic learning, their poor academic socialization, the high African American school dropout rates and declining college and graduate school attendance, the disparities in rewards for educational achievement between Blacks and other groups, and the low expectations of academic productivity held for African American students, particularly males. (Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994, p. 16)

The United States education is considered one of the essential avenues to upward mobility. As a result, African American male students that have experienced difficulties in obtaining a quality education are finding fewer opportunities for employment and less likely to obtain upward mobility.

Discussion of Emergent Themes of Roy (Cohort II)

Personal responsibility of the teacher, student, friend, family, and/or himself was one of the emergent themes that Roy revealed. Roy's lack of family structure did not deter from his responsibility to learn. The teacher's organization and demands to learn the material affected Roy's outcome in the course.

When families experience instability, these disorienting changes can be counterbalanced with stability by having the school counselor, or other school staff, coach parents in developing organizational strategies and behaviors that reflect strong leadership, security, and dependability. Such organizational strategies can reassure children when the family is undergoing change. (Amatea, Smith-Adcock, & Villares, 2006, p. 187)

The teachers' understanding of their students' needs and awareness of the students' lack of resources should not be misinterpreted as their students' lack of interest. Scaffolding the students' need to connect with their teachers on a personal level is needed to be balanced with creation of a professional environment. In the opinion of Roy, the researcher created a positive learning environment. The environment was sensitive, knowledgeable, and accepting to the home and community cultures of the African American males (Davis, 2005; Polite & Davis, 1999; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2005).

The inability of Roy's classmates to take responsibility in meeting the demands of the Advanced Placement Biology course affected his attitude toward the course. Datnow and Cooper (1997) addressed the role of peer group ideology especially in their formation of students' academic and cultural identities. Peers' achievements who are struggling are negatively influenced by underperforming fellow students; (Zimmer & Toma, 2000). Other studies have argued that students make their choices in their lives rather than responding to structural demands (Fine, 1991; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Labov, 1982; MacLeod, 1987; Willis, 1977). Roy stated:

I think that's another reason I had pessimistic view towards [A.P. Biology] [T]he majority of [the] class view of the class was difficult and [my classmates were] extra pissed-off... They were just like, "Damn." [Laughter] "Like, I actually have to work." It affected me. ... [but] I had people [around me] who kept me grounded, like Sophie.

Roy's attitude toward the A.P. Biology course was affected by his peers' negative responses; however, the influence of his peer Sophie's positive attitude kept him on course. Roy recognized that his personal responsibility is the final outcome of his actions.

When I look back now, I probably should have done more for the class and not actually point the finger as much. At the time when I was taking the class, I was kinda pointing the finger at the teacher...

Roy identified the behaviors he could have applied to change his outcome.

Couple of things I would change. I would read the material, obviously, in detail. I would just pay attention more, study more, and a lot of things that I didn't do that I probably could have done to better myself in the class. ...I think I just have a different outlook now. I matured a little, you know.

I think it's a lot of time management because I'm big procrastinator and I need to get rid of that demon. Because procrastination is the devil—hahaha!

Roy's best friend, Cupid, in college did not trust friends and did not take responsibility to reach out to others for resources. Cupid did not attain the same academic self-regulation that Roy possessed to self monitoring and self judging his performance in school (Zimmerman, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Morisano, Hirsh, Peterson, Pihl, and Shore (2010) stated that goal-setting programs is an intervention that decreases the struggles that many undergraduate students experience. Roy's motivation on school achievements was on the recognition of feeling good beyond the internal satisfaction of grades being earned. The need to address the motivation behind the academic goals is crucial to understanding academic success: "the quality of student learning as well as the will to continue learning depends closely on an interaction between the kinds of social and academic goals students bring to the classroom, the motivating properties of these goals, and prevailing classroom reward structures" (Covington, 2000, p. 171).

Roy's extrinsic decision was to choose a profession that concentrated on his satisfaction in connecting with people rather than monetary rewards.

You know I just want to enjoy life and live life with the people that make me happy. I think the people in my life are more important than stuff or the status... [N]obody really cares if I'm a doctor.

Roy's extrinsic motivation is addressed in Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) research of construction of expectancy and value that created the motivational and cognitive determinants of achievement behavior. The ecological family environment created the opportunity to accept Roy's responsibility in life. "Of the many studies that have shown a statistical correlation between background, life chances, and life achievement, few seem to explain adequately the fact that many youngsters with disadvantaged backgrounds perform very well in school and in later life" (Clark, 1990, p. 18). Roy's grandmother developed a sense of personal efficacy by actively encouraging Roy's persistence and performance in the face of difficulties or challenges. The persistence of performance despite the difficulties or challenges is the key to develop personal efficacy (Clark, 1983; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Scheiler & Carver, 1992).

My family had its ups and downs. My focus came from, I think, well my Grandma a lot of times when I was little ... It's a different environment. I would go home. Normal, I would go to my Grandma's house. [S]he would take little things and magnified them by 10. I remember one time when I was little she had me stand in front of my uncle and my aunt and sing a little song we sang for school, [and she said,] "Oh you're so good!"

One third of all children in the United States, roughly 25 million children, have a nonresident parent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). There are approximately six million children living with grandparents and other relatives (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000) and approximately 4 million children under the age of 18 live in households headed by

their grandparents (Lugaila, 1998). Grandparents are a vital role in their family's lives (Musil, Warner, Jaclene, Zauszniewski, Jeanblanc, & Lercher, 2006) and often they are given full custodial care of their grandchildren because their own children cannot provide the necessary parenting (Bowers & Myers, 1999; Dolbin-MacNab, 2006). The parents are unable to provide a safe home due to their alcohol or drug abuse problems, mental or emotional problems, neglecting or abusing the children, going through a divorce, losing their job, needing child care, going to jail, or even dying (Burton, 1992; Creighton, 1991; Hayslip, Shore, Henderson, & Lambert, 1998; Jendrek, 1994; Larsen, 1991; Minkler & Roe, 1993; Minkler, Roe, & Price, 1992; Shore, 1990). Roy's mother and father were both involved in drugs and have spent time in the penitentiary.

Racism was not an emergent theme; however, Roy acknowledged the larger social and political ecological environments with the college groups.

At school I'm involved with a bunch of Black groups. I guess it's like well we can't do anything because you're a White man holding us down. I don't believe that! I think people were following me around the store. They looked suspicious. You know what I'm saying? No one ever follows me around the store. I don't feel like I'm ever discriminated against personally. A lot people feel this but I've never experienced it.

African Americans have been subjected to more racial profiling, paid more for homes, and earned less wealth than their White counterparts (Oliver & Shapiro, 1997; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002, 2006). Shapiro (2006) suggested that the location of residences for African American people is a possible solution to closing racial wealth gap because location opens opportunity to safer environment, better schools, and transfer of wealth to the next generation. Roy stated that he has not experienced racism; yet, he identified an incident in a fast food chain but was uncertain if it was racism or discrimination of his youth.

I don't know because if he did not ask me because I am an African-American male or because I am young. It could be because I'm young or maybe it's cause I don't wanna just say because I'm Black. It's like maybe he thought I would not give. I love giving to charity. You know what I'm saying. Why aren't you asking me?

Discussion of Emergent Themes of Cupid (Cohort II)

Fulfilling the role of hero by doing the right thing was one of the emergent themes in the types of relationships Cupid developed with teachers, friends, and family.

Campbell (1949) defined hero:

The modern hero-deed must be that of questing to bring to light again the lost Atlantis of the co-ordinated soul.... And this is not a work that consciousness itself can achieve.... The whole thing is being worked out on another level, through what is bound to be a long and very frightening process, not only in the depths of every living psyche in the modern world, but also on those titanic battlefields into which the whole planet has lately been converted.... Not the animal world, not the plant world, not the miracle of the spheres, but man himself is now the crucial mystery.... The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. ... It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal—carries the cross of the redeemer—not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair. (pp. 388-391)

Campbell's (2003, 2008) modern view hero was in relation to cultural environment; however, Mehrtens (2011) stated that modern hero evolved by responding "an internal orientation that has an impact on both the inner and outer life (p. 2)." Cupid's heroism guided his relationships internal and external to create decisions about his life and educational pursuit. Cupid's hero position reflects an altruistic behavior. "Altruistic behavior can be defined as behavior that benefits another organism, not closely related, while being apparently detrimental to the organism performing the behavior, benefit and

detriment being defined in terms of contribution to inclusive fitness” (Trivers, 1971, p. 35).

Sharing knowledge is a type of reciprocal altruism in which the behavior exhibits a small cost to the giver; however, a greater benefit to the taker (Trivers, 1971). Six primary heroic types involve unjustified risk: civil, martial, good Samaritans, politico-religious figures, whistleblowers, and those who challenge problematic bureaucracies that are shifting from heroic actions to altruistic actions (Franco, Blau, & Zimbardo, 2011). Cupid characterized the teacher as a person that inspired him to strive for excellences. The enrollment in the challenging course coupled with a teacher who was empathetic, creative and raised expectations for her student performance were the factors that made Cupid feel the teacher was altruistic.

More on what the teacher did. . . . She was always, (PAUSE) like the ambassador of the entire school. She was in everybody’s lives and helped with everything from school work and personal life or to crack jokes or eat food. [Laughter]

Ms. Hobookie. She’s a very special woman. I’m glad that she’s in my life amongst others, and honestly to know Ms. Halasa is a dream come true cause you never, never really have that one teacher. You know that every teacher isn’t like Ms. Halasa. She’s a good teacher, she actually cares. If she sees you on the street it’s more than just a hi or goodbye. Like she takes time out. You know she actually wants to take the time out and cares. It’s just that love, you know that she has for her students and it shows. [Laughter]

Cupid perceived himself as a genuine hero who was protective of all the women in his life: girlfriend, mother, and grandmother.

I believe that is the reason why I shield Natasha so much is because of the way that my mom tries to shield me. [Smiles] I think that’s a big part of it. She’s always been there to protect me as my mom and my dad. She loves me one minute and beats me down the next minute. My grandmother’s laughing at me, watching me. I feel like in my 20 years I’ve been through so much. Even with

Natasha cheating on me and stuff. I still love her and I would never want her to experience any form of bad that I had.

The social roles that males and females occupy determine their behaviors (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Men's expectations for help are associated with protective roles and are surrounded with non-routine and risky actions, while women provide assistance with personal favors, emotional supports, or counseling (Aries & Johnson, 1983, Berg, 1984; Johnson & Aires, 1983). The altruistic feeling that Cupid has will appear the strongest in his family structure.

Every man feels his own pleasures and his own pains more sensibly than those of other people. . . . After himself, the members of his own family, those who usually live in the same house with him, his parents, his children, his brothers and sisters, are naturally the objects of his warmest affections. They are naturally and usually the persons upon whose happiness or misery his conduct must have the greatest influence. (Smith, 1853, p. 321)

Cupid portrayed a family loyalty that manifested from the lack of a father; therefore, he became the male hero. Role models that display father-like behaviors are known as social fathers such as brothers, brothers-in-law, grandfathers, uncles, male mentors, or any male relative or family associate (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Hunter, Friend, Murphy, Rollins, Williams-Wheeler, & Laughinghouse, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999). Cupid's maternal uncle fulfilled the role as a social father.

That's my Uncle Daddy but he's not my biological father. He's not the one that had me." When I seen my dad that day I was a kid, and I think we had lost that game like many others, but I still was extremely happy.

The second emergent theme developed as Cupid reflected on his past, to know yourself and your limitations. Cupid's understanding of limitations involved taking challenging courses to develop strength, understand weakness and learn from past mistakes.

Limits are don't overstretch yourself! You have to know yourself. All high school students should take one A.P. in high school. In college, take one hard class one easy class and one intermediate class. Do not overload yourself, otherwise, you will find yourself overworked.

Understanding self-regulation in academic performance and learning is delineated in the students who outline their settings and define their challenging goals for themselves (Bandura, 1989; Schunk, 1990); are able to apply appropriate strategies to achieve their goals (Zimmerman, 1989); and are enlisting self-regulative influences that motivate and guide their efforts (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, 1986).

The issue of race was prevalent in Cupid's personal and public life. Cupid highlighted the overt acts of racism in his description of his relationship with his White girlfriend. There were some reservations of Cupid's intelligence in comparison to his girlfriend Natasha, both the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) and individual course grades. Often Natasha's family would question Cupid's intelligence.

My mom said, "He got a 3.8 or something. Ms. Henry said, "Oh, yeah or really!" She is very surprised. She said, "Cupid, can I see your report card?" So, I handed it to her. She just laughed. I guess she didn't think I would do better than Natasha. Not, really! I didn't really give a care. It hurt me that she would think that I was stupid or something like that but ...I think that's why she wanted to see my report card. Maybe, she thought I was lying, which was funny.

Haycock's (2001) research on the achievement gap discussed that the school personnel underestimated student potential; however, Cupid's experiences with underestimating his academic ability was questioned on a personal level with his girlfriend's family.

The issue of race was an emergent theme that was prevalent in Cupid's life; in particular, it was highlighted in his neighborhood. Cupid was stopped and questioned by the police while riding his bicycle. Cupid felt his experience was a result of racial

profiling where the police decided to stop and interrogate him based on the key factor of race alone (Weitzer & Tuch, 2002, 2006).

I guess I know I didn't come up in the system. After they checked my bag they couldn't find anything. Do I think racial overtones are common??? I guess so. I don't really think I know I believe. In that situation? Yes! I believe if I was a White kid nothing would of happened to me. It was actually pretty funny because I biked up the street, cause I came all the way down the street. I biked up the street and some White kids, some of them were younger but there was a lot of older kids, older than me. I don't know maybe if I would of had a little kid around me but still maybe nothing would have happened.

Blacks are stopped by the police are more likely than Whites to view the stop as unjustified and are dissatisfied or angry leaving the situation (Bordua & Tifft, 1971; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001; Wortley, Hagan, & Macmillan, 1997).

The issue of race was also evident when Cupid traveled with his mother or his girlfriend Natasha.

She said "O! Can you believe that that M.F. said that I was a loser and I should break up with you. He doesn't even know you." She was, I've never experienced something like that. She's like, we've been going out for six years and I've never seen or heard anything like that. Then I kind of felt bad because I should not have to protect her, and maybe, she would have been more accustomed to handling that situation.

The Melton's (1941) caste theory is an outmoded way to conceptualize interracial relationships; instead individuals are seeking interracial relationships for love and compatibility (Davidson, 1991-1992; Porterfield, 1978). Yancey and Yancey (1998) suggested that the decision to interracially date has more exploratory power of the relational assets of an individual may desire than the race of that individual.

Discussion of Overlapping Emergent Themes in Cohort II

African American males mask their academic performance by downplaying or camouflaging their abilities, acting as a class clown, being involved in athletics or doing meeting minimum academic requirements (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Contrary to the notion that African American students do not value academic achievement (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), this research found that all informants expressed the desire to succeed academically. The informants all expressed that their choice of enrolling in the Advanced Placement Biology course did help them with transition into college:

DWill: I wanted to get a feel of what college was like starting now therefore when I get to college it won't be so brand new.

Roy: [I]f you're planning on doing something, especially if it's science-related in college, you should really apply yourself in those [high school] classes and learn as much as you can... If you learn more in high school, then your transition to college will be a lot easier.

Cupid: The A.P. Biology was helpful in the college transition.

“African American students are grossly underrepresented in the more advanced level science and mathematics courses...” (Russell & Atwater, 2005, p. 692). Cora et al. (2011) argued that African American students who are underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses are less to do with the scholastic ability of the students but more to do with the social factors. The number of African American students taking the challenge of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school is increasing in numbers. During 1985, the College Board reported 2,768 African American students were taking AP courses in the United States (The Journal of Black Higher Education, JBHE, 2007). A dramatic increased occurred in 2006 with more than 94,000 AP exams taken by African American students (JBHE, 2007). The AP test average score for African American students was

1.96, while their Caucasian counterparts scored a 2.96 average score (JBHE, 2007). Each individual informant was aware that Advanced Placement courses provided a college experience within the safety net of their high school setting. The Advanced Placement Biology course provided the groundwork for the informants' transition into college or university. The informants expressed their views that AP Biology was a real science course compared to the other traditional high school science courses.

D.Will knew the Advanced Placement courses were college level and were challenging compared to his other high school courses. D.Will was willing to motivate himself into these more difficult courses despite the challenges associated with them.

I recall the labs being performed in this course. The one that sticks out the most to me was the starfish...None of my other science classes that I took let us do hands-on labs with actual creatures that are parts of the Earth. Our other science labs had to do with like water, salt, butter or posters. But this lab was actually hands-on with us taking, doing, and messing around with an object and we were writing down the information on datasheets. It was just a more hands-on experience and it made me look as if this is actually science. This is stuff that I really wanted to do. Now, I'm in an A.P. course and this is what it is.

Roy expressed that the Advanced Placement Biology course prepared him for the rigor for college. He stressed that high school courses were the foundation to his preparation for college courses, especially if taught in a rigorous manner. Roy expressed that his transition into a college Biology course was made with ease because of his high school AP Biology course; however, the transition into a college Chemistry course was more challenging.

Here's my problem, Chemistry kicked my butt when I first started at Ohio State because when I was in Chemistry I played it as a joke in high school. But Biology wasn't as hard because when I was Biology class, our teacher actually made us do our work. So, I had to learn, so, the transition was a little better.

Cupid had the foresight to understand that Advanced Placement courses would be similar to college courses without the additional challenges of college life.

The A.P. Biology was helpful in the college transition. O, yes it was amazing. I recall different... because I lived in a dorm with my best friend. Different peers in that class were really struggling on adapting different study strategies. They used strategies they used in high school and that really did not apply to college level. We would have this big study slam with everyone. A.P. Biology course really helped with learning how to study for this and the future. Before in high school, I really did not study but this course showed me how to and if I did, I can be successful.

Discussion of the Overlapping Emergent Theme of Cohort I and Cohort II

The informants provided ideas about their definition of learning. In addition, all six informants chose Betty Gardner's definition of learning.

Betty Gardner (2007) stated: Learning is created by the learner and it generates its own energy that reinforces itself through the cycle of ongoing creativity and change. Unless a student interacts creatively with the information to construct meaning, there is little or no change. If they have not changed in some way- by gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, acquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior - as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. (p. xv)

MarsB's response discussed the importance of relevance.

...I'll remember it for years to come. History class--I really don't remember jack about History. So, I don't feel like I really learned anything. Well, that's probably because I didn't really think it was relevant.

MarsB augmented his own definition of learning by incorporating Gardner's idea that learning is created by the learner and must be the individual's responsibility to apply the new information to learn it.

I actually kind of agree with that last one [Betty Gardner] because it puts the learning on the person. It is not like a certain formula. The other ones seem like learning is this, this, this and this, period. [The last] one it's more specific and more attuned for the person. You're only going to learn what you want to

learn or if you can apply what you're learning to something. You have to be able to relate it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 588-630)

Zack's response to his own definition learning included the recollection or familiarizations with terms or vocabulary.

I know that I really learned something just from the fact that terms are jumping out. If we were having a conversation about biology, I don't know if I would remember exactly what mitosis was, but I would recall the term. I mean that's how I can know I learned something. Sometimes it's not the coach that teaches you, it's much more than that.

Zack concurred with MarsB's thought that the individual must be able to apply the new learning to the present situation. Both informants emphasized that engagement is necessary to learn new materials and ideas.

After reading these definitions, I would say learning probably has to do with what Betty Gardner said. She said that gaining a new understanding is when you learn something you learn, you get a language you want to learn the information you were trying to understand. She stated the more engaged students are in creating meaning, more determined they are.

The kind of work that I do right now, I am learning . . . a lot and I think whenever you do something different you have to learn. Whenever you go to a new job or do something new, obviously keep doing it and you are gonna learn to adapt to it. I know I've learned things because I was real bad before I worked there. I know I didn't know those things prior to working there. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 737-781)

Troy's response echoed the previous two informants. In his own definition of learning he discussed that learning occurs when the student can apply his learning in an interactive way. Troy discussed that in his A.P. Biology course the instructor created interactive labs and activities that engaged the students in class.

I learned something when I can apply it or I can say I can use it, like just getting a better understand[ing] for it. If you can take a word, they can give you a definition but you can use that same word with the same definition in a different sentence. You can apply it differently. It was that way and Ms. Halasa taught that way. She just didn't lecture most of the time. I mean she would lecture, but she would have visuals. She would throw something like the labs. She had this

creative sense of it and I would just remember that part of it. (Original Transcript Number Lines 973-997)

Troy augmented his definition of learning with the fact that students' interest is crucial in learning new data.

I like Betty Gardner because you are not learning about things unless you are interested. Let me think . . . I wanted to say you can discover more about subject because things have not been discovered. If you are not interested in learning, you are not interested at subject at hand. (Taped conversation during narrative cross check)

D.Will's response of his own definition of learning was similar to Zack which included the recollection or familiarizations with terms or vocabulary.

How do I know that I really learned something? After taking the A.P. Biology class, I was able to answer science test questions or was familiar with the material or whatever the information is being talked about in the new science class because the information seems to come back into my mind. . . . I do not struggle with the answers or materials being taught.

D.Will indicated the students' efforts to engage with the material by asking questions or reading the material, and personal effort is involved. D.Will's personal effort echoed the similar argument that MarsB indicated that personal responsibility is crucial of individual learning of new information.

After reading the above statements, my thoughts are closer to Betty Gardner. I believe hands on My definition of the word "learning" to me in my own words is beginning to understand the material, understand thoughts, and understand the different data or different aspects of what is being taught to you. You learned something by being taught something then you get it, you suck it in, you use it, you know it well to your advantage and to better your education. At least that is what I think it is. I also liked the statement she said that if they have no changes in some way of gaining a new understanding, considering a new idea, inquiring additional data, or learning a new application or behavior as a result of their interaction with the information, they have not learned. Basically she is saying if the students do not taken in the material and better understanding the material then hands on then they are not learning something. It is just like opening game and pulling out all the pieces and just playing with the without reading the instruction to know how to play the game.

The more that you put out trying to learn the material then the more you will know what you learned about the material. The more work you put out, you will get a better understanding in your head and in your mind. You can better your education with the material that was taught therefore you learned.

[By] “put out” [I mean] your work ethics such as the way you are studying, reading the material or asking questions. The more that you put yourself out there to learn the material then the more you want the material to be taught to you. The better you learn the material then the better [your] understanding. The better your education and the further on you will be with your studies.

[However] my learning experience is to learn the material and always try to find the easy way out. I do not like to study too much. Therefore, as long as I learn the basics then I know it will be on a test. If I know the class is not hard then I know I can just get in and learn the material. Boom! I will take the test, ace the test and its okay. The A.P. Biology class was harder. I am saying to myself, well, this class was harder and it is time for learning. I need to study harder by putting [in] more of an effort. I should not always try to look for the easy out; you know the scapegoat, or the easy route knowing that this class is hard. A class is easy then you’ll try to take the easy way out. I thought the class was hard; therefore, I had to study harder basically saying more time, more questions, more answers, staying over late and trying to learn the material. That’s what I mean by harder, harder makes a good student. (Original Transcript Line Numbers 519-611)

Roy’s response discussed the transformation of old information with new information.

I might agree with Betty Gardner’s definition of learning. I would say I’m a dumb person but I’m a quick learner. I think that learning is taking information that was given to you to different circumstances and situations in your life and [applying it] to your life. I think that learning transforms the mind. If you didn’t learn or you were unable to learn than you will always stay the same person. I am learning person because I am constantly changing. I need to use definition of learning as taking experience to life. I don’t think that they always have to be scholastic. I think the experiences that you go through in life and the people you meet and their ideas incorporate into your psyche [and make you] a better person.

I define a better person if you want to better yourself for yourself. I don’t think that you would say that you’re a better person to me and then say it to somebody else. I think you’d learn to be yourself.

Basically my definition of learning would be that I would take it in and make changes the way I think in my psyche. I should have worked harder. It’s all on me. I have the information that concerned me and I didn’t apply it to my everyday life like I should have. (Original Transcript Number Lines 915-995)

Cupid's response of his own definition of learning was beyond familiarization or recognition of terms and vocabulary. Instead, he recognized that the ability to teach someone else the application and explanation of concepts defines learning.

The way I know I really learned something is that I'm able to take the information and not just to recite it word for word. That's just me but I actually apply it to any given situation. Math for instance I'm able to go through a story and calculate it mathematically in my head what the price is gonna be on two different purchases. So with science, I'm able to look at certain things, and, if I can't explain, it then I did not learn it. With my younger cousins, I would explain why the leaves change to this color and if I'm able to explain to them about chlorophyll and other things I learned. So that's when I actually know that I actually learned something.

Cupid's response to the definition of learning was augmented by the students' engagement of learning and application to the everyday life. He expressed that his A.P. Biology course provided activities and labs that engaged the students, and the students were able to apply the relevance of the new information learned.

After to listening to these four I think my definition was closer related to Betty Gardner. I felt the last sentence: The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn. I love math class therefore it had more meaning to me than other class. It connected more to stories I had about Ms. Halasa. I learned the most out of A.P. Biology. I believe if you learn, you are most able to learn if you are actually doing what the theory is asking by actually doing something hands on. I believe me, personally, I'm able to absorb it so much better than just learning definitions and being able to spit them out. I think learning is the ability to acquire new information and use it through everyday life.

I believe it is learning. I don't think it's the type of learning that, especially with A.P. Bio, cause there is a lot of different definitions and words that you have to learn and the way we had to learn it. We had to learn it so fast and so quick that I believe that was the best way to learn was like we did. I'd think about it, the definitions that we had to learn, um my pseudomata. It was the activities that you did, like the song that you had made. When we were actually able to interact ourselves in a cycle put ourselves in a position where we could actually see people move around and see the chromosomes move around and do stuff, and I think that was like everybody memorized it. Understanding! We were able to fully understand why something is happening. You know, what it's actually doing. (Original Transcript Number Lines 519-615)

Chapter VI Summary

Chapter VI connected the emergent themes with the literature. Outlined were the Cohort I and Cohort II individual emergent themes and the overlapping emergent themes among each Cohort informants. The informants in Cohort I emergent themes were MarsB: (1) the understanding of personal responsibility, (2) the notion of a scientist, and (3) the issue of gender being more of an obstacle than race; Zack: (1) the understanding that education is valuable, (2) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family and coaches, and (3) the development of integrity through the participation in sports; Troy: (1) the ecological neighborhood environment influences an image, (2) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped transition into higher education, and (3) the issue of race surfaces in their ecological environment. The overlapping emergent theme that the three Cohort I's oral history narratives had similar was the impact of their relationship with their mothers.

The emergent themes from Cohort II were: D.Will: (1) the interactions and influence of relationships with others, in particular teachers, friends, family, and God, (2) the individual's personal effort determines their outcomes, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in the ecological environment; Roy: (1) the personal responsibility begins with the individual, teachers, students, friends, and/or family should be taken (2) the need for recognition of internal satisfaction, and (3) the issue of race as it surfaced in their

ecological environment; Cupid: (1) the role of portraying a hero, (2) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits, and (3) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life. The overlapping emergent theme that the three Cohort II's oral history narratives share was the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped with the transition into college or university. Cohort I and Cohort II informants' overlapping emergent theme in all of their oral narratives was that learning is defined by the students' willingness to actively interact with the new materials.

CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

“Education is a precondition to survival in America today” (Marian Wright Edelman, 2010, p. 2).

Introduction

Despite the efforts of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2001) to provide an even playing field, the growth of achievement gaps among minorities with their White counterparts has been alarming (Conlin, 2003; Mead, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; The Nation’s Report Card: Science, 2005; Norman et al., 2001; Wang & Mirski, 2010). In particular, African-American males’ achievements at all school levels has been the lowest tier (Donnor & Shockley, 2010; Hughes & Bonner, 2006; Mincy, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2007; Noguera, 2003; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003). African American males’ lack of success in school and society is supported by the quantitative data that reveal low test scores, high dropout rates, and crime and incarceration statistics (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Fryer & Levitt, 2006; Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 2009, 2010; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2008). Fewer minority candidates are able to compete in STEM-related fields in the private sector, the public sector, or the academic sector (NAEP, 2009; Staples, 2010). Therefore, the engagement and investment of African American males in

school is the long-standing debate among educators and government agencies (Mincy, 2006; National Urban League, 2008; Noguera, 1996, 2003; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2008; Watson, 2006). The school science, the peer school science community, the lived experiences during and after graduation, and the meso-community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) within the ecology of six self-identified African American males who were students in a high school Advanced Placement Biology course oral histories' revealed the following: (1) their mothers influenced and impacted their school science performance and counterbalanced negative influence; (2) The American Dream, success is due to personal responsibility, effort, and action; it is a creed within these informants; (3) the informants are interested in science, however, have no notion of what a scientist does for a living; (4) the issue of gender being more of an obstacle than race; (5) the informants understood the social capital that education provides; (6) the informants were influenced both positively and negatively by the valued relationships and interactions with others; (7) the informants developed their sense of integrity through the participation in sports; (8) the ecological neighborhood influenced the representation of their self-image; (9) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped with the transition into college; (10) the issue of race is a necessary element to understand their ecological environments; (11) the personal effort is measurement of individual's ability to move forward; (12) the recognition of internal satisfaction motivated students to accomplish goals; (13) the role of portraying a hero was prevalent for survival and integrity of not stepping into the shoes of negative male role models; (14) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits help future students to set and accomplish their educational goals; (15) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life of

these self-identified African American males; and (16) the students need to be interactive with new materials and apply them to their lives to be learning. The research identified the shared responsibility between both educators and individual African American male student begins with the engaging in an open dialogue regarding the ecological environment both inside and outside of the high school in order to decrease the plight that African American male students experience in high school.

Summary

The contextual frameworks of Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized the need to view lives in context and the need for researchers to examine the multiple contexts that influence children and families, as well as the relations among these contexts. Therefore, the contexts are one influence on the individual but also individual characteristics influence or often form the contexts in which individuals interact (Aber, Gephart, Brooks-Gunn, Connell, & Spencer, 1997). This study began with the desire to probe the lives of six self-identified African American males in context of an Advanced Placement Biology course. The oral histories are not smooth, but the conversations drew powerful thoughts and generated the needed transformation for schools, in particular individual classrooms with similar demographics.

Ferguson (2002) concentrated on teachers' beliefs. Lynn et al. (2010) examined teachers' beliefs about African American male students in a low-performing high school in an African American School District and found that school personnel overwhelmingly blamed students, their families, and their communities for the minority achievement gap. The study took place between 2003 and 2005 in a low-performing high school in

Summerfield County, a Black suburban county in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States with a poverty rate below 8%, according to the United States Census (2000). The school exhibited a culture of defeat and hopelessness and was not a safe space for caring teachers who wanted to make a difference in the lives of their students. In contrast to this, the researcher was a teacher who believed her students were more than just a sum of their experiences and capable of rigorous work despite the odds or obstacles in their ecological environment.

Public schools do not have a set of requirements which must be met in order to be enrolled and, therefore, they accept all types of learners. In particular, the urban districts in America are challenged with the issues of poverty, single home families, high dropout rates, and many other factors. Despite these odds against urban districts, many have made important strides in improving achievement for students. The Council of the Great City Schools released *Beating the Odds* that reported over the years 2007-2011 that 83% of urban school districts increased their math proficiency of fourth graders on state tests and 84% improved the math proficiency of eighth graders. Significant gains have also been recorded in reading and math performance of urban schoolchildren on the rigorous National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as *The Nation's Report Card*. The Great City Schools boast the largest number of Blue Ribbon schools, continue to be perennial winners of the U.S. Academic Decathlon and other national scholastic competitions, and seven out of the nation's 10 best public high schools ranked by *Newsweek* magazine hail from urban school systems (White Paper: Unite to Make a Difference Forum, 2011).

What I Have Learned: New Discoveries

When I was 4 years old there was young shy Black male classmate and was not playing with other students. I engaged him to play with me and eventually our other classmates began to include him in the group. My pre-school teacher told my mother how observant and sensitive I was. His father wrote me a thank you letter for being a friend to his son. (The Researcher, Halasa)

I believe the use of oral history narratives provided an insight into the everyday lives of six self-identified African American male former students in their communities. The oral history narratives created a powerful tool to study the human behavior of these informants' ecology – role, setting and interaction among them. The quantitative data demonstrated the prevalent lynching that is metaphorically occurring in the classroom; however, the informants did not address the school's ecology as being the problem. The informants sketchily described their ecological environment outside the school that reflected similar opinions to the community's negative responses toward the bronze award that North High School earned. The informants' experiences paralleled the recurring outcry response to Weigle's editorial by focusing on Young Black Males (YBM) being portrayed as criminals, rapists, carjackers, thieves, and thugs. The informants' oral history narratives illustrated that their self-image was derived from countless messages through family, teachers, policemen, storekeepers and other children in the neighborhood. The self-image further defined their degrees of adequacy.

Troy taught me that one's neighborhood played an important part in identifying who you are. His appearance allowed him to fit into a stereotypical box concerning society's definition of a Black male. Troy had a sense of what being non-White meant, and his ecological neighborhood influenced the representation of his self-image. Cupid's

oral history narrative discussed that the issue of race is a necessary element to understand his ecological environments; in particular, his relationship with his White girlfriend.

All six informants discussed that their mothers or “mother figures” were an ecological factor that influenced and impacted their school performance. In particular, Troy discussed how his mother’s talks counterbalanced the negative influence of the street life. I believe educators need to be passionate “mother” figures to engage students in their educational lives. I learned from all the informants that they needed to have some type of relationship with their fathers. MarsB, Zack, and Troy all stated they had positive relationships with their fathers, while D.Will, Roy, and Cupid had limited relationships with their fathers. Cupid taught me that his father’s negative actions had an opposite effect on his ideas of what being a good man should be. “To grow into a healthy man, a boy must develop a close bond with his mother so he can learn about his own humanity; and then he must be taken by his father to discover what it means to be a man” (Elium & Elium, 1992, pp. 91-92). Elium and Elium eloquently described the balance that fathers and mothers create in a family; however, these six informants desired their fathers but their mothers were the central role in their lives.

All the informants discussed that the content needs to be interactive and relevant to their lives. As I reflected on my own classroom teaching, I knew intuitively that if I was bored, chances were my students were too. Troy, Zack, D.Will, and Cupid taught me that teachers’ attitudes, motivation, and most of all abilities to care for their students make a difference. The differences can range from enrollment into rigorous honors and advanced placement courses to the motivation to learn the curriculum. MarsB constantly talked about the responsibility of the individual learner. I learned that educators need to

balance the demands of standardized curriculum to individualize their students' interests in order to engage them; however, MarsB stated if the students are not interested then the responsibility for the learning relies on the students. MarsB did not imply that failure was an option; instead, students need to have voice and be valued. Therefore, a relationship must be established between teachers and their students to assure that learning will occur.

Troy, D.Will, Roy, and Cupid noted that the A.P. Biology course was rigorous, and the demands of the teacher helped them transition into college courses. I realized that the late night study groups that mimicked my own college days taught students the pedagogy of their learning. The support I provided gave them the opportunity to engage in the material in a non-threatening way. Cohort I MarsB, Zack, and Troy were among classmates who were not required to have completed pre-requisite coursework prior to their enrollment in the Advanced Placement Biology course. In contrast, the students in Cohort II, as a whole freshman class, began to be subjected to challenging curriculum with their enrollment in Honors English and Honors History courses. Despite Cohort II's previous performance in their middle school, D.Will, Roy, and Cupid were placed in rigorous course work at the onset of their freshman year. However, the students were supported utilizing the Guskey's Cycle (Guskey, 1997, 2003) in order to master the standardized curriculum in rigorous honors courses.

MarsB was passionate about science but did not interact with individuals who engaged in science careers. Therefore, MarsB had no notion of what a scientist does for a living. I learned that science teachers need to give examples or bring more people who are in the field of science into the classroom for students to engage in relevant dialogue

concerning their occupations. Roy identified that his interest in medicine branched from television medical programs. Cupid's interest in science grew from the A.P. Biology course, while Troy's interest in science decreased as the result of the A.P. Biology course; however, he valued the experience for pre-college exposure.

Mars.B taught me that the issue of gender is more of an obstacle than race. Yet, he discussed that success is due to personal responsibility, effort and action; personal responsibility is a creed within D.Will, Roy, and Troy. Zack valued education more for his siblings than for himself. He taught me that sports gave a sense of belonging of teamwork, but he never had the burning desire to excel beyond the requirements in high school. Zack wanted to get a "good job" and to be financially secure. I learned that not every student is going to pursue a formal education, but the informants understood the social capital that education provides.

D. Will concentrated on his spirituality for a source of strength. I learned from him that his unstructured home was used to motivate and create the strength of resilience to overcome future obstacles. Despite D.Will's willingness to change his path and the big dreams to change his life, he allowed the influence of others to interrupt his plans. Cupid would describe that D.Will lacked the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits. The self-discovery and understanding could help future students to set and accomplish their educational goals.

Roy had the most difficulty expressing his thoughts in the research when it involved criticizing me, the researcher. Roy didn't want to hurt other people's feelings, but he did have strong opinions, a great demeanor and understanding of himself. Roy was valued by others, and all he wanted was everyone to be happy. His grandmother was

a big influence in his life and provided many opportunities for Roy to obtain recognition from other family members. The recognition and acknowledgement of positive actions helped develop his sense of internal satisfaction and motivation to accomplish goals he set-forth. On the other hand, Cupid's internal satisfaction was fulfilled with a caring factor of being a hero to protect or save someone even if it resulted in the destruction of his own education goals. Cupid taught me that despite the possible jobs, careers, or educational paths that a person could pursue, he did not want to sacrifice being a family man. Cupid honored the moments in time because he knew he could not capture the past or know the future; however, he relished the present.

Implications

The lessons I have learned in completion of this work hold the potential for larger implications for African American male students, family, classroom teachers, counselors, principals, district administrators, government agencies, and instructors in teacher education programs. The implications are transformative in recommendations for K-12 schools' and universities' environments to be agents of change in regards to African American males' interactions with their (1) Family, (2) K-12 School Environment, (3) Higher Education Environment, (4) Bridge between the High School and Higher Education Environments, (5) Curriculum and (6) STEMM Curriculum.

Family

Create opportunities for the engagement of African American males' parents or guardians, in particular mothers, with their school environment. Evidence of this implication was derived from informants Mars.B, Zack, and Troy in Cohort I. Cohort I

informants' common emergent theme was their mothers as the most influential adult figure. In Cohort II this only emerged with Cupid, while D.Will and Roy lived with an aunt and grandmother, respectively. The common theme among all is that a strong woman provider existed in all their lives, mother figure. The K-12 school environment needs to connect to the parents or guardians who value their son's education despite the society that devalues him (Neblett, Chavous, Nguyen, Sellers, 2009).

K-12 School Environments

Critically examine the ways in which the broad cultural experiences of African American males are acknowledged in their schools and their community ecological environment. Mars.B and Troy in Cohort I and Roy and Cupid in Cohort II discussed the emergent theme the threat of racism inside and outside the classroom setting. Create conversational circles where students are engaged in critical dialogue that validates their individual life histories to create reflective and critical learning communities. These conversational circles would open the concept of resiliency that informants D.Will, Roy, and Cupid in Cohort II discussed in regards to a safe environment. The discussion would indicate an examination of broad cultural experiences outside the classroom and how the cultural experiences affect the classrooms and the expression and development of their masculinity of the informants Cohort I and II.

Higher Education Environments

Challenge and transform environments in higher education that encourage and support the marginalization of African American males through the perpetuation and continuation of practices that value whiteness and devalue their experiences. As a result,

the African American males would encounter supportive teachers who are culturally responsive and genuinely care (Pringle, Lyons, & Booker, 2010). Therefore, pre-service teacher programs need to foster competent and confident experiences to develop the ability to work with African American students (Siwatu, Frazier, Osaghae, & Starker, 2011) in particular, African American males. My own higher education environment engaged in enrollment of cultural responsive courses; however, my own personal journey as Arab American who experienced busing African American students in the 1980s and development of lifetime friendships and relationships with first generation/English for Second Language (ESL) friends developed my competence and confidence in working with minority students.

In addition, there needs to be work with the higher education community to ensure appropriate academic and social support for African American male students in higher education. The landscape of higher education detects a large need to recruit African American males across all college and university disciplines. However, recruitment should be augmented with the “development of additional supports in navigating college, academics, personal matters, and work responsibilities” (Pabon, Anderson, & Kharem, 2011, p. 365). Therefore, school is a viable option for African American males; however, they must be willing to invest in their achievement (Hucks, 2011).

Bridge Between the High School and Higher Education Environments

Develop personal relationships with African American males at the outset of their freshman year by providing a mentor for the next four years of high school. Informants

Zack and Troy in Cohort I described strong relationships with their coaches for sports. Troy indicated this strong relationship was one of the deterrents from him becoming a high school drop-out, contrary to his 12 other friends who did not graduate high school. Byrd et al. (2011) argued that athletic programs should renew an interest in the academic majors that not only enable to student to play in college sports but to ensure success after graduation in a career that encompasses their great passion for sports.

Furthermore, there is a need to form a sustainable bridge to assist African American males beyond the high school environment. Hucks (2011) argued the role models that African American male participants indicated to be themes were: (1) Bailers and Rappers, (2) Same Ole Black History Month, and (3) Is School an Option? because they have fallen victim to teachers and schools that have not been truly invested in their achievement. Therefore, the need to provide social, psychological, and college or career guidance to African American male students will increase alignment of interests to work toward future. Implement programs that examine how to help individual responsibility to prevent the issues of violence and disruption that forms both on the streets and in school.

Curriculum

Drop gateway requirements to enter Advanced Placement Courses. Challenge African American males through rigorous curriculum. Cohort I and Cohort II described the Advanced Placement course challenging. D.Will stated the A.P. Biology class was “real science.” Troy indicated “School prior to A.P. Biology was slow pace. And then when you got to A.P. Biology, you had to care because it was fast pace. It’s just the teaching. I think schools should be changing in the way they are teaching.” Hucks

(2011) stated that (1) lack of resources to engage students and (2) too outdated curriculum are noted by the African American male participants. Hucks (2011) articulated and extrapolated that despite the age of the participant the teaching invested in collective achievement: “It is caring, filled with high expectations, resourceful, culturally responsive, dynamic connected to and built on other stakeholder contributions, no matter who that stakeholder is—male, female, Black or White” (p. 352).

STEMM Curriculum

Minorities who are STEMM deficient as participants in the science enterprise will lack scientific literacy needed to access employment and future technologies. Wright (2011b) argued by increasing the number of African American students who graduate from high school with a strong foundation in science and mathematics, more will then go on to pursue postsecondary education and careers in STEM. Emidin (2011) suggested teachers and students should engage in the five Cs of reality pedagogy: (1) Cogenerative Dialogues, (2) Co-Teaching, (3) Cosmopolitanism, (4) Context, and (5) Content. As the AP Biology instructor, pedagogy reflected in the course was similar to the five Cs addressed respectively:

- (1) She provided opportunity for her students to reflect on their classroom experience and critique instructions, and discuss inhibitors to their classroom learning from a students’ perspective.

Meranda stated: She was the only teacher I’ve ever had who went out of her way to ensure that every student was as successful as possible. I learned to come to her not just with questions about Biology, but with questions about life. We had many great discussions in room 125, her behind the stacks of books and papers always scattered about her desk, and I sitting on the black lab table, legs dangling, and mouth constantly blabbering. (M.Watling, personal communication, May 15, 2003)

Cupid stated: More on what the teacher did. She really informed us on different ways we should go about studying. She taught us that I can only teach you so much. Our teacher was willing to meet with us in an after class study session (big smile) until 9:00 p.m. when school closed. Janitors are kicking us out and night school is coming and we still were going to different rooms to study. She would meet with us at different coffee shops and stuff like that to go over tests. She was extremely nice and even if I wanted to talk about something personal. She was always, (PAUSE) like the ambassador of the entire school. She was in everybody's lives and helped with everything from school work and personal life or to crack jokes or eat food [Laughter]

(2) She provided opportunity for her students to be the teacher.

Troy stated: A.P. Biology was more advanced and what you put into it is what you would get out of it. My previous high school science courses, it was always the teacher and basically the work was already mapped out, and it was just us raising hands, questions, answers, and we did it as a class. This one was more your own work at your own pace. Ms. Halasa did give us the materials and our notes. She taught us but it was up to us to get what we wanted out of the lessons or whatever she taught us. We then could put forth the effort into our A.P. test or our independent studies.

Roy stated: Ms. Halasa helped us a lot actually. I remember at the end of the class. I was in her office doing makeup stuff. I was frantically doing papers at the end of things so I could turn them in for my grade. I can't say that she didn't help. And maybe, I should have applied myself more at the time. We had study groups before tests. We would come and stay for like hours and hours studying before our tests.

(3) She provided opportunity to choose roles during science labs and daily classrooms.

Cupid stated: My taste for science actually grew cause I've never been in a class where we were able to dissect any type of anything. After dissecting I knew that either being a surgeon or just working in the medical field was definitely a possibility for me. The way I saw myself acting that possibly would put me in a situation later in life when I acted very smoothly.

(4) She used artifacts from students' lifeworld and reflected their communities.

D.Will stated: I know when a teacher is going to be able to teach me. For example, when I first was introduced to Ms. Halasa I just knew she was okay. She is a science freak because her room was full of all kinds of science stuff. She reminded me of the "magic school bus, Ms. Frizzle" [from the TV series The Magic School Bus], because she was always into science, and she always trying

to feel out her students' interest. I guess basically what I am saying she just gets what life is about. She knew her science.

Mars.B stated: Class was good. The genetics part is the one of the things that I actually, I talk about all the time . . . in my day-to-day conversations with my friends. We talk about our kids and what they look like, and what comes from where--stuff like that. Genetics actually mean reproduction.

Troy stated: Ms. Halasa challenged me to enroll in her Advance Placement Biology course but, of course, I complained the entire way. I have been suspended from school numerous times for disrupting classes. Many of my peers in the Advanced Placement Biology course believed I did not belong and even other teachers were surprised when I told them I was taking the class. I recall that on several occasions, Ms. Halasa would remind me that taking this course would help me transition to college the following year.

(5) She reframed from being the content experts

Zack stated: There was something new every day and that is what I liked with Ms. Halasa. It really wasn't the same, like lecturing or covers the same topics, it was always something different. That's one thing I did like about that class. I mean I never knew what to expect when I was in the class. She kept stuff fresh. Ms. Halasa would do stuff. I mean she would just stomp on it do it [Laughter]

Recommendations for Future Study

This study was based on a small sample of African American males enrolled in Advanced Placement Biology course; therefore, more studies are needed involving advanced and honors courses in different subjects. Additionally, the African American males that did not graduate high school would be another voice that needs to have oral histories recorded in narrative form. Another obvious recommendation would be to conduct a similar study using African American females, Hispanic, White, and Asian males and females to see how their experiences compare and contrast to African American males in various demographics.

Conclusions

As a result of the interviews conducted and the narratives included in this oral history study, these findings provide insight into the life experiences of six self-identified African American males. These interviews highlighted the ways that have affected some African American males in regard to (1) their mothers influenced and impacted their school science performance and counterbalanced negative influence; (2) The American Dream, success is due to personal responsibility, effort, and action; it is a creed within these informants; (3) the informants are interested in science, however, have no notion of what a scientist does for a living; (4) the issue of gender being more of an obstacle than race; (5) the informants understood the social capital that education provides; (6) the informants were influenced both positively and negatively by the valued relationships and interactions with others; (7) the informants developed their sense of integrity through the participation in sports; (8) the ecological neighborhood influenced the representation of their self-image; (9) the enrollment of Advanced Placement Biology course helped with the transition into college; (10) the issue of race is a necessary element to understand their ecological environments; (11) the personal effort is measurement of individual's ability to move forward; (12) the recognition of internal satisfaction motivated students to accomplish goals; (13) the role of portraying a hero was prevalent for survival and integrity of not stepping into the shoes of negative male role models; (14) the ideology of knowing yourself and your limits help future students to set and accomplish their educational goals; (15) the issue of race was prevalent in both personal and public life of these self-identified African American males; and (16) the students need to be interactive with new materials and apply them to their lives to be learning.

More importantly, the informants reclaimed their humanity by breaking the silence to share their voice. My hope is these oral histories in this study will create new knowledge for the reader, a political agenda that creates a critical consciousness, and transform the existing social issues in education. These oral histories place a voice beyond the statistical crises of African American males and provide an illustration of resiliency, perseverance, and resistance that are needed for a more positive future for African American males.

CHAPTER VIII
RESEARCHER'S VOICE

*They may see the good you do as self-serving.
Continue to do good.
They may see your generosity as grandstanding.
Continue to be generous.
They may see your warm and caring nature as a weakness.
Continue to be warm and caring.
For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.
It never was between you and them anyway. (Anonymous)*

Where I Was

As a colleague was looking at our staff picture in the main office, he commented, “Where are all the brothers?” I looked at him and asked, “What are you doing to help bring the brothers?” My colleague was an African American male from the neighborhood and actually graduated from the high school where we were both teaching at that time. I began to reflect upon my own classroom teaching experience and realized that it mirrored my own high school experience. There were fewer African American students in honors and advanced placement classes. In particular, African American males were not represented in either setting: (1) 1985-89 during my own urban public high school classroom experiences and (2) 1995 the beginning of my teaching service in an urban public high school science classroom.

Where I Am

My graduate courses expound on equity issues and preached about the constitutional right that students must be provided a sound education in a public school environment. During a professional in-service, educators were naming every alphabet soup initiative implemented that school year to assure the accountability of their urban public schools. However, these initiatives did not reflect the educators' voices or even the students they were representing; for example, the idea of applying medical model such as rounds (Elmore, 2002) or business model such as high stake testing accountability as quality control found in No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. In addition, the idea that superintendents are Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and are not required to have been classroom teachers who arose from the "trenches" of the classroom is another example. I began to think how the transformation of a school system is similar to the Industrial Revolution of 1750-1850. During the Industrial Revolution, the changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the times. At one time, a high school diploma would provide you an opportunity to achieve a living-wage paying job at one of factories or assembly lines of the industries. A person could afford a house, a car, and health insurance, as well as provide and afford a better educational opportunity for their child.

I firmly believe that public schools reflect the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the times. During the Industrial Revolution the manufacture assembly lines were developed to mass produce items; however, our capitalistic business world has implanted their mass production lines in countries with fewer labor rules, fewer

environmental laws, and fewer tax restrictions in order to increase profits. Similar to fast food markets today, no matter where you are in the world, McDonald's special sauce on Big Mac sandwiches is the same no matter where it is purchased. Public schools are demanded to mass produce Big Mac sandwiches. Despite the human complexities, disabilities, social, financial or emotional barriers, students in public schools are struggling with, the public K-12 educational system must create an assembly line that produces proficient, advanced, or excelled test scores. The combination of basic to excellent scores will produce a one snapshot measurement of quality control of the public school systems.

Public schools are now victims of this business model in which charter schools dismantle the monopoly of public education funds. In contrast, these charter schools are not held to the same accountability and scrutiny level of public schools. Instead of highly qualified teachers or educators, charter schools provide a warm body to monitor student instruction on computers in any old building. Students have the option to stay at home and utilize the K-12 Cyber School with absentee parents being the monitoring system. The quality control of snapshot measurements of standardized test are overlooked because again the charter schools are similar to capitalistic business that implanted their companies in fewer restricted rules, laws, and regulations; therefore, the quality control of the students that attend the charter schools are not held to same accountability.

Students in public schools are the future voters, policy makers, media, and even presidential candidates. The 2012 presidential candidates are discussing the banning of birth control from insurance. Rush Limbaugh, a radio talk show host, goes so far as to call an educated young Georgetown law student a "slut" and "prostitute" because she

provided Congressional testimony on the need for birth control coverage by insurance companies.

RUSH: Well, what did I say? I said, “If we’re paying for this, it makes these women sluts, prostitutes.” And what else could it be? If we are buying it. There’s a couple of stories here. There’s a fundraising e-mail from the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee, got it right here, and they got a picture of me that makes me look . . .

. . . “What does it say about the college co-ed Susan (sic) Fluke who goes before a congressional committee and essentially says that she must be paid to have sex. What does that make her? It makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute. She wants to be paid to have sex. She’s having so much sex she can’t afford the contraception. She wants you and me and the taxpayers to pay her to have sex.

“‘What does it say about the college co-ed [Sandra] Fluke, who goes before a congressional committee and essentially says that she must be paid to have sex — what does that make her? It makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute.’ I am absolutely repulsed right now. Sandra Fluke, the courageous Georgetown Law student who had the strength to stand up in Congress against Republican attacks on birth control coverage, is now under attack from the right wing. First, House Republicans refused to let [her] testify. Now, they think they can shame us into silence.” They go on to ask for money. “Defeat Anti-Women Republicans. Contribute. Deadline Midnight Tonight.” It’s just hilarious. What. . . ? I want to know: Ms. Fluke, who bought your condoms in junior high?

Who bought your condoms in the sixth grade, or your contraception? Who bought your contraceptive pills in high school? Wouldn’t you be just as likely to go broke in high school and junior high as you would be in college? Who paid for ‘em then? Ms. Fluke, because of Obamacare, you are still on your parents’ insurance coverage. Why doesn’t your parents’ policy provide your contraception? Why do we have to? You’re still a child according to Obamacare. Of course, the rest of us have had it confirmed. Al Sharpton, when he heard what I said, he said, “Resist We Much!” Sharpton was unaware. “What did Lombard say?” He said, “Resist We Much!” Here’s Frank “The Lout” Lautenberg. He was on the Senate floor this morning. (Emptysuit, 2012)

In contrast, there is no one arguing the point of why Viagra[®] should be covered for men who are having sex with these so called “sluts”. The discussion of moral dilemmas couched and mainstreamed by a small group of hate-mongers makes me wonder what one-fits-all knowledge and skill sets formula all public schools should be teaching future

students. As noted in the Limbaugh case, if teachers speak publicly, they will be humiliated for fighting for choices. Is there a deeper and more cynical hidden agenda of Big Business (i.e., insurance companies) such as the human life produced would help stimulated the economy or keep the poverty high and the oppressed even more oppressed? This young lady is someone's daughter, sister, and even a possible mother.

Despite the attempt to create mainstreamed common curriculum, highly qualified educators, and accountability demands, students in public schools are not a hamburger. Many public schools are addressing all kinds of students' needs from hunger, clothing, and providing a safe environment against all odds of home life, cyber space, physical school environment, not to mention school. Technology is rapidly changing but all educational institutions from K-16 are unable to acquire computers, computer-related equipment, and scientific tools needed to be implemented immediately which lessens the opportunity to provide a true personalized "We make it your way" educational process. Therefore, the delayed mass amount of data or experiences provided from technology to the educators for immediate application to produce the needed high quality control mass production of students who will be productive citizens and consumers in our society is solely missing. Again the students in public school classrooms are not Big Macs with the same special sauce. The lesson I learned from the oral histories of my students MarsB, Zack, Troy, DWill, Roy, and Cupid is that educators need to think that the students in our classrooms are extensions of our own (societal) family. I personalized their educational experience, held them to higher standards, scaffolded their learning, heard and captured their voices during their classroom experience, and kept my lines of communication open even post-graduation. In order to create science literacy and increase the participation of

students in future science careers, students need to experience science in relationship to their world and to connect their lives and experiences to future science careers. In order to accomplish this, educators should provide speakers, labs, and actual on-site and off-site science experiences. Below, Cupid's words were captured on tape without me being in the room, and I believe it is the essence of what I feel for my students and the students may feel about me:

She's a very special woman. I'm glad that she's in my life and amongst others. Honestly to know Ms. Halasa is a dream come true because you never, never really have that one teacher, that you know cares and not that every teacher is like Ms. Halasa. She's a teacher, she's a good teacher but she actually cares. If she sees you on the street it's more than just saying hi, goodbye, or listen to you speak, and off she goes quickly because she has something to do or she is rushing to do nothing at the house. She takes time out. You know she actually wants to talk and take the time out and cares. It's just that love you know she has for her students and it shows . . . so um she is special and if any man winds up with her, you know, he found a very special person in Ms. Halasa (Laugh) Alright signing off is Cupid. I'm gonna get back to my day job. I love you Ms. Habookie.

I have learned to be resilient, thankful, compassionate, true to myself, and finally grateful because the students who entered my life became my (extended) family. I am able to take that same compassion and passion out of the classroom and into the classrooms of an entire urban public school system in my current capacity as Science and Health Learning Specialist K-12.

Where I Will Go

In the back of mind, I hear another African American male colleague echoing "Kats, it is the system!" My reply has been "but people make-up the system." Obtaining a doctoral degree will build the bridge between my practical experiences and institutions of higher education. "Publish or perish" is the rule of thumb in universities or colleges.

Yet, there is a disconnection between the published researchers trickling information to the individual students that teachers touch daily in public classrooms. I envision myself as a possible synaptic nerve ending sprouting dendrites with my research connecting the oral histories of these self-identified African American males to make somatic bodies of educational classrooms. As the Industrial Revolution, “For the first time in history, the living standards of the masses of ordinary people have begun to undergo sustained growth. . . . Nothing remotely like this economic behavior has happened before” (Lucas, 2002, pp. 109-110), I wonder will public education be the instrument to truly change the standards for ordinary people or a form of control of the masses?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.
IRB ACCEPTANCE LETTER



NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: January 13, 2009
To: Katrina Halasa
125 Morningstar Drive
Akron, OH 44303
From: Sharon McWhurter, IRB Administrator *SM*
Re: IRB Number 20090106 "African American Males in their Ecosystems"

Thank you for submitting your IRB Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects for the referenced project. Your application was approved on January 13, 2009. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

- Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.
- Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.
- Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.
- Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.
- Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.
- Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Approved consent form/s enclosed

CC: Francis Broadway - Advisor
Stephanie Woods - IRB Chair

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
330-072-7000 • 330-072-6261 fax

The University of Akron is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Institution

**THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FINAL REPORT FORM FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Move through the document using TAB or mouse. Do not use the ENTER key. To mark a box, click with the mouse at the beginning of the shaded box (it will turn black). *Please TYPE all information – handwritten forms will not be accepted. Print and mail with original signatures. Keep a copy for your files.*

Please complete and submit this form, along with a brief summary of research results and explanation of any adverse events. Upon receipt of this form, your IRB file for this protocol will be closed.

Title of Research Project:		
IRB Application Number:	Date project was completed:	
Principal Investigator:	Number of subjects accrued:	
Department:	Phone:	Email:
Faculty Advisor (if student PI):	Advisor Dept.:	

1. Please summarize on an attached page the results of the research. If this project was funded you may submit the abstract from your final report to the funding agency in place of the summary.
2. Please describe any adverse events or problems encountered during the project which elevated the risk to participants. (Adverse events are to be reported WHEN they happen.)
 None see attached page
3. Explain any withdrawal of subjects from the research: None see attached page
4. Describe any complaints received about the research: None see attached page
5. Are there any conflicts of interest to report: No see attached page
6. Please check the appropriate box below. **NOTE:** If analysis of identifiable data is still ongoing, the project must remain open and a continuation application must be submitted.
 Remaining study activity is limited to analysis of data that have been stripped of all direct and indirect identifiers.
 Please provide the date that all identifiers were stripped: _____
 All research activities are complete, including data analysis.

I certify that the above information is accurate and complete:

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Signature of faculty advisor (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

FOR IRB USE ONLY: Acceptance of Report: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B.

A SAMPLE OF TEN PAGES OF TRANSCRIPTION

1 K: First of all, I would like to thank you, D.Will, for coming this evening. I'm going
2 to give you your consent form, and as you read through it, you agreed to the
3 procedures, the benefits, the compensation, and that you have the right to refuse.
4
5 Di: Yes.
6
7 K: And withdraw at any time. So go ahead and start signing that. Here's another
8 copy for you to sign and keep for yourself
9
10 Di: Is this mine?
11
12 K: Yes, that is yours. Okay, so why don't you go ahead and state your name.
13
14 Di: My name is D.Will Williams.
15
16 K: And what year did you graduate?
17
18 Di: I graduated in the year 2007.
19
20 K: And what class did you have with me, Ms. Halasa?
21
22 Di: I had you in A.P. Biology.
23
24 K: Ok. I'm going to start asking you a series of questions and you're allowed to
25 answer them and you can edit whatever else you feel you'd like to add and at the end
26 of the interview you can add whatever else you think should be added, okay? So,
27 we're going to fill out when filling out an application, what category would you
28 place yourself in regards to race?
29
30 Di: Of African American.
31
32 K: Okay, and what school science course did you choose to take your junior and
33 senior year in high school?

34
35 Di: Did you say what science courses?
36
37 K: Yes.
38
39 Di: Um, my junior year I took A.P. Biology.
40
41 K: Okay.
42
43 Di: And my senior year I took Chemistry.
44
45 K: Okay. What influenced you to take those courses?
46
47 Di: Well, to take the A.P. Biology
48
49 K: Yes.
50
51 Di: I was influenced by you, so also it furthered, you know, my education and made
52 me work towards, cause it was a college prep class
53
54 K: Uh-huh
55
56 Di: So, and I was planning on going to college once I graduated. So, I wanted to,
57 you know, get a feel of what it was like, you know, starting now so when I get to
58 college I won't be so, you know, brand new to this cause I'll already be familiar with
59 this with the A.P. class that I took.
60
61 K: So if there anybody else, you said, I influenced you to take that class. How did I
62 influence you to take that class?
63
64 Di: You influenced me because you knew I was a hard worker and, you know, it's
65 always good to try different and new things. So you pushed me to do it, so I did it.
66
67 K: Okay.
68
69 Di: Then my senior year I took Chemistry and, um, nobody really influenced me to
70 do that. I heard, you know, heresy that Chemistry is easy,
71
72 K: Um-huh,
73
74 Di: Plus it was a new teacher and I'm always up for new things. So, I felt well, since
75 this is a new teacher I'll try her out. So, and I took Chemistry with her, so.
76
77 K: What did you hear previously before enrolling in A.P. Biology?
78

79 Di: That it was hard.
80
81 K: Uh-huh.
82
83 Di: That the class was pretty much, like, hard and it was college-prep. So, I knew
84 that it was going to be hard.
85
86 K: Right. And anybody else influences you in any other way when you were in that
87 class? I mean, what was so hard about it according to everybody?
88
89 Di: The work was hard, and it was just constant work, work, work. Um, that was the
90 hard part, just basic work. It was the first class that I had ever taken, well I took two
91 A.P. classes my junior year. I took A.P. European History and I took A.P. Biology.
92 And, it was more work and more study than the regular classes was. And, it was like
93 a bit of a challenge for me, so.
94
95 K: Okay. Um, here is the A.P. Biology book that you used.
96
97 Di: I remember this. (laughter)
98
99 K: Yes. And, in taking a look at the book, what do you recall about the course?
100
101 Di: What do I recall about the course?
102
103 K: Um-huh.
104
105 Di: That it was work, it was hard, it was new things. It was more Science. It wasn't,
106 like, other classes that I took in high school were Science, but this was more open
107 about Science, basically, the more data, the more procedures, more, it was just more
108 Science added to it other than the other classes that I took previously in high school.
109
110 K: Well, you keep saying Science, it was more Science, what does that mean? Give
111 me a little more detail of what Science means to you then.
112
113 Di: What Science means to me is like, your DNA, your genetics, just what we live
114 in. Our world is Science. It's like it's in the environment, the nature. I just think
115 Science is the way of living, you know, our lives. So, we're Science. That's what I
116 think Science is.
117
118 K: Because you kept saying it was different than your other Science classes. Why
119 was it, you said, one of the things you mentioned was data and procedures. Did you
120 other Science classes not have those things, or
121
122 Di: We had them, but it wasn't, more. This was more advanced.
123

124 K: Okay.
125
126 Di: It was more, what you put into it was what you get done.
127
128 K: Okay.
129
130 Di: And my previous high school, you know, Science courses, it was always the
131 teacher and basically the work was already mapped out, and it was just us raising
132 hands, questions, answers, and we did it as a class. This one was more your own
133 work, you know, your own pace. You give us the material, you teach us, you know,
134 give us our notes, and it was up to us, you know, to get, you know, what we wanted
135 out of the lesson or whatever you taught us. So, we could put forth it, you know,
136 into our A.P. test or our independent studies that, you know, we were fit to do.
137
138 K: And, speaking of, you were saying something about independent studies, I have
139 an example here of the class syllabus. Do you recall anything about the course and,
140 as you're looking through that course syllabus, what do you notice, um, was things
141 that came to your mind about the course itself.
142
143 Di: That it was college prep and that the grading scale was a little different. It was
144 more harder than what it was, you know, in the other high school, I mean in the other
145 Science classes. It was more of a college scale grading scale. So, that's why I knew
146 the class was going to be hard because, uh right here it say that a 100 to a 93 is a A.
147 Well, we used to do, it was more of a 92 would still be an A, but right here it's a B.
148
149 K: Yeah.
150
151 Di: So, I just knew that the class would be a lot more harder. And then I see that we,
152 um, like everything that we did in the class are basically the percent of our final
153 grade. So, our tests and quizzes meant, you know 30%, and then the labs that we did
154 was 30%, so we knew it was more of a hands-on, more, um, what we put into it was
155 what we going to get out. So, if you don't do your work, or you know, didn't care or
156 didn't do your labs or whatnot, then you knew you was going to fail the course and
157 you weren't going to get, you know, the grade that you should have gotten.
158
159 K: Okay. Um, here were your grades. You have your transcript right here in front of
160 you.
161
162 Di: Uh-huh.
163
164 K: And, it taking a look at your grades, let's go to when, it's actually on the first
165 page, and you had A.P. Biology, and you see the two grades that you got were C's,
166
167 Di: Uh-huh.
168

169 K: Okay, um, and what can you recall, um, about this course based on the grades that
170 you received in the course itself?
171
172 Di: That it was hard! (laughter) I always thought that, basically, if it was on the true
173 grading scale, not a college prep grading scale, this C would be a B.
174
175 K: Um-huh.
176
177 Di: So, I always looked at like, okay if I got a C, well, in all reality I really got a B
178 so, as long as I didn't get no D or no F, then I just knew.
179
180 K: Cause when we look at your previous grades, overall, I mean you have A's and
181 B's literally, you know, across the board in so many ways. And then when you get
182 down to this Junior year, and you had to take, you know, Algebra II/Trig, A.P.
183 Biology, A.P. European History, you know, we see a little bit of struggles occurring
184 there where you, you know, ended up with some C's, even as far as European
185 History, you had a little bit of trouble with that. But when taking a look at your
186 grades, in particular, for A.P. Biology, did you feel that there was anything you
187 should have done differently, anything you know, that you felt that you needed to do
188 more of when you earned this grade, or was there, I mean, do you feel that the grade
189 was fair, consistent, you know, what did you think about that?
190
191 Di: I just thought I should have worked harder. And then, like, every time I thought
192 I was working harder, I still got a C. I just, I put forth my effort. So, actually, I was
193 alright with the grade, cause like I said before, the C was really a B, you know, if it
194 was the true grading scale, not the college prep grading scale.
195
196 K: Right.
197
198 Di: Then, you know, so I always thought of it as if I still got a C then I know, you
199 know, deep down inside it's a B to me, so
200
201 K: Right.
202
203 Di: I figured I was still doing good.
204
205 K: Okay. And, um, what do you recall about the daily structure of the course? What
206 do you remember about class? What do you recall about the course itself, how the
207 structure was every day that you came into to course?
208
209 Di: Everyday that we came into the course it was work. Like, we would come in, we
210 would like, talk, play a little bit, but then after she walked into the room we know it
211 was all strict work, bring out your notebook, bring out your book, your textbook,
212 time to take notes,
213

214 K: Uh-huh
215
216 Di: And, sometimes you'd have us, you know have quiet time and do our
217 independent studies, you know, she would give us time for us to, you know, catch up
218 on our work because she knew that the class was hard and it was a struggle for, you
219 know, the majority of the class, you know, a majority of the students inside the class.
220 So, she would give us, you know, time to work and time to do out independent
221 studies. So basically she was giving to us, knowing that the class was hard. So it
222 was like, I mean, it was a fair class.
223
224 K: Okay, and what do you recall about the labs performed in this course?
225
226 Di: It was one that stick out the most to me, and that was the starfish.
227
228 K: Um-huh.
229
230 Di: And, it really like, none of my other classes, none of my other Science classes
231 that I took let us do hands-on labs with, like, actual creatures, or you know, parts of
232 the Earth. Like we had to do some with like water, or salt, or butter, or posters. But
233 this one was actually hands-on with us taking, you know, doing, you know, messing
234 around with a object and you know, righting down the information, the datasheets. It
235 was just a more hands-on experience and it made me look like, alright, this is
236 actually Science. This is stuff that I would really be wanting to do. Now, you know,
237 I'm in an A.P. course and this is, like, this is what it is.
238
239 K: And, what do you recall about the A.P. Exam that you took in May?
240
241 Di: It was hard! It was, the test was, the test itself was hard. It was, like, a nice,
242 quiet environment, um, you know all the students from that class were actually
243 taking the test, the teacher was in the room. It was basically every man for himself.
244 The test was, you know, it was a bit of a struggle, it was kind of hard, so.
245
246 K: What do you recall that day? Was there anything special that your teacher did to
247 prepare you? Is there anything that, prior to that, is there anything that was done
248 differently for you guys?
249
250 Di: I know everyday Ms. Halasa would tell us, "Take your notes, cause you never
251 know if this material might be on the A.P. exam." And, it was right, because
252 everything, basically we went over inside of the class was, you know, somewhat or
253 summed up inside of the A.P. exam. Um, so I'm saying throughout the whole, you
254 know, course of the whole year of the A.P. class, she was warning us and letting us
255 know, like, you know, the test is a struggle, the class is a struggle. But, you know,
256 only what you put into it is what you going to get out so if you come in taking your
257 notes, come in listening, you know, study up for your test, study up for exams, you'll
258 be alright. So, throughout the whole thing that's exactly what she did.

259
260 K: Well what about for the score that you received, do you remember your score?
261
262 Di: I know it was low.
263
264 K: Okay. Yeah, and what did you feel when you got that score? When you got that,
265 when you opened up that paper and you actually saw the score? After, you know,
266 reflecting on the course itself, did you feel you could have done differently or did
267 you feel that it was a fair, you know, fair reflection of the work that you had done?
268
269 Di: To be honest?
270
271 K: Be honest.
272
273 Di: To be honest, uh, I really didn't put forth no effort in studying, or put forth no
274 effort in, you know, trying to, you know, study for this test, or you know really care
275 about this test. I'm like okay, it's the A.P. class, I'm still getting C's in it, so, I
276 mean, either way it's like I'm loosing on the test but I'm still winning because, you
277 know, I'm getting a C, or, you know, I'm still passing the class. I felt like, well this
278 is not a big percentage of our grade, taking the A.P. exam. So, whatever we got on
279 it, it's only benefited us. I mean, if we would have got, you know, a magnificent
280 grade on it then it was a credit going to college or it was getting an incentive, or, you
281 know something like that. So it was like,
282
283 K: So, um, obviously, we did talk about that at one point.
284
285 Di: Right.
286
287 K: Correct?
288
289 Di: Correct.
290
291 K: So, Ms. Halasa did got over what kind of benefits you can get from the test. You
292 knew that going into the test?
293
294 Di: Right.
295
296 K: And, did you get also practice tests to work through?
297
298 Di: We took practice tests. We took them, I want to say, like at least we took two a
299 month, I believe.
300
301 K: Um-huh.
302
303 Di: So, it was, this class was hard! (laughter)

304
305 K: And, um, what is your interest in Science after taking the course itself.
306
307 Di: Um, I'm not no Science-type guy. So, I'm going to be all the way honest.
308
309 K: Uh-huh.
310
311 Di: Science is not a factor to me. just know like, everyday is Science. Like I said
312 before, Science is the way of living. Science is us. I mean, we're living Science.
313 We're natural, I mean, we're nature. Just us being human beings, we're living in
314 Science, period. Because everyday, people are evolving, different things are coming
315 about, um, your DNA change, your genetics change. So, like I said, Science is all in
316 the world. So, how can you, you know, skip something that your living? But, I have
317 no interest in Science. Like, I wouldn't be a Science teacher. Um, I take a Science
318 class, you know, in college cause that's the criteria that you have to take. But
319 Science is not an interest.
320 K: Okay. If you were to give advise to other students about school Science, what
321 would you say?
322
323 Di: If I had to give advise to other students about school Science, I would just say
324 learn as much as you can, and always try to be hands-on with, you know, different
325 materials in science class. Um, if you are confused about something, always raise
326 your hand and ask cause that's why teachers are there. Um, it just, Science is really
327 a difficult, you know, type of subject to learn. But, you know, that's with
328 everything. Just, I would just say like if you're struggling with anything in Science,
329 teachers are there to help you. There's lots of material out here, the internet, there's
330 help everywhere. So don't ever think that since you're in a Science class and it's
331 hard that you should just give up. You shouldn't. Because, it's like I said before,
332 there's always help. Um, we're living Science. So, um, I mean.
333
334 K: Um what would you um, what are you presently studying and why, at the
335 university?
336
337 Di: Well, when I return back to the university in August, I will be studying, um,
338 Fashion Merchandising.
339
340 K: Okay, and why did you pick that?
341
342 Di: I picked Fashion Merchandising because, um, I have interest in Fashion, I have
343 interest in the Entertainment business, and um, I know with Fashion, how can you
344 beat it? Fashion changes everyday. Um, different fashions are, you know, brought
345 about to the world. And, you know, just like to me fashion is like seasons, they
346 change. Fashion is like a human being, they change. So, that's why I chose it.
347

348 K: And, um, is there anything else that you want to add about the A.P. course? Other
349 things you want to talk about that, you know, your memories of the course, and
350 things that were not brought up at this point in time?

351

352 Di: To be honest, like I said, um, the course was very hard. It was a very difficult,
353 you know, type of course to take. But, throughout it all, we had a wonderful teacher.
354 She was always there. She always cared. She always was there. She just wanted us
355 to, if we had questions to ask. We might argue or, you know, get into it. But, like I
356 said before, she was always there. She was a hands-on teacher. Um, she did have an
357 assistant.

358 K: Uh-huh.

359

360 Di: You had an assistant that was helping us. Plus, it was a fun class because my
361 best friend was in there, I had a couple of friends in there, and my sister was in the
362 class. So, it was like, I was always surrounded by people that I liked. So, I mean,
363 we had some pretty good memories in the class. Even though a lot of us didn't pass
364 the test, or get a good grade on the test, overall it was a good class. It taught us a lot.
365 It just let us know, like, if you're planning on going to college, if your planning on
366 wanting to be somebody, you have to work towards everything. Because in life
367 there's nothing that's going to be handed to you if you don't work towards it.

368

369 K: And, you know, you said that there were friends of yours in the class. Did that
370 influence you in any way in staying in the class, or even going to the class?

371

372 Di: Yes, it influenced me a little bit because, like I said, I'm a people person. I love
373 being around my friends, being around people, and I seen them going to the class.
374 So, I'm like, okay, I'm going to the class. But it wasn't like I'm some follower type-
375 stuff. It's just like, it was a fun class to be in, even though the work was hard, you
376 could never tell it was hard unless we told you because every time you came into the
377 class, there was always something to do, activities always going on, us always
378 smiling, us always laughing. Except when we was doing them independent studies,
379 and we was having them tests.

380

381 K: What are independent studies?

382

383 Di: Independent studies are basically you being the independent person studying and
384 getting the material on your own throughout the book, um, throughout different stuff
385 that was taught to you in previous Science classes. So, basically, the independent
386 study is yourself studying, you know, for the material and with the material.

387

388 K: Now you mentioned earlier that, um, this course was preparing you for college.
389 You did accomplish your first year of college, and could you tell us how this course,
390 when reflecting back, how did the two go hand-in-hand for you?

391

392 Di: Um, it came hand-in-hand with me because, like I said, through this course it was
393 constantly work, taking notes, asking questions, raising your hand. Not scared to,
394 you now, talk to you professor or talk to you teacher. So when I got to college and I,
395 you know, started to take the courses that I was taking, um, you know, reflecting
396 back on, you know, the A.P. class, or you know, the A.P. European class, and, it just
397 fits well hand-in-hand because it was constant work, constant taking notes, constant
398 always having questions that need to be answered. So, I really believe that this class
399 did, like, it prepared us for college. Or prepared me personally for college because
400 in college, it's always work. Nothing in college is handed to you. And through this
401 class that, the A.P. class that we took, she let us know, like I'm not going to hand it
402 to you as if you were in my previous Science class. This is a A.P. course. This is
403 college prep. In college, nobody's gonna walk with you hand-in-hand. It's all what
404 you put in is able, you know, if what you're going to get out of the whole situation.
405 So if you're in the A.P. class and you don't care and you're not doing nothing, then
406 you're not going to get, you know, the passing grade. But also, when you get to
407 college, you're going to be stuck and you're going to be lost because, like I said
408 before, the A.P. class was just basically, um, college prep, I mean the college class.
409 So, it really helped me.

410 K: And going back to that, would you advise anybody else to take an A.P. class? I
411 mean, you know you kept saying it's hard, and it was more real Science, again we'll
412 go back to that real Science component. Did you feel, I mean would you advise
413 other people to take the class?

414
415 Di: I would advise different, I mean, not necessarily want to say different people, but
416 the ones that you see with the good work ethic, the ones that are, you know, go-
417 getters and strivers for, you know, excellent or want to learn more. I would advise
418 them to take the class. But if you have somebody that's in Science, not necessarily
419 saying they're failing, but F's or D's or C's, but somebody that just don't have
420 interest in Science but has to take the class, you know, has to take a Science class in
421 order to graduate, I wouldn't recommend a A.P. Science class to them, no.

422
423 K: Now, that's interesting. You said it wasn't, you wouldn't necessarily not require
424 the because of their grades, you would not require them because of their work ethics.
425 And why do you think that's more important than having certain grades before you
426 get into the A.P. course?

427
428 Di: Because in the A.P. course, like I said it before, it's constant work. So if you
429 don't have good work ethic,

430

431 K: Uh-huh.

432

433 Di: You're gonna be lost. I mean your work won't be turned in on time, you
434 wouldn't do your work, you wouldn't raise you hand, ask questions, you wouldn't
435 take your notes. So, therefore, what's the use of you taking the class if you're not

436 able to, you know, work towards your education or work towards passing the A.P.
437 test. So, with like no good work ethic in the A.P. class, you'd be lost.

438

439 K: When you mentioned something about Science, you felt like you were doing real
440 Science. In your opinion, what is Science?

441

442 Di: You asked me that already. But, Science to me is like, Science is life.

443

444 K: Besides life. I mean, what made you think. Let me, let me change the question.
445 Um, you said Science is life, is everything around you. But, what is, in your eyes,
446 um, the difference between Science, you think is happening in the world and Science
447 that happened in your high school classroom? Do you think there's a difference, or
448 in your eyes, do you feel it's still the same?

449

450 Di: Somewhat it's still the same, and somewhat it's different. Like Science is
451 happening in the world is like with nature or animals. But the Science that we took
452 in the A.P. course started with Darwin and his theory, or evolution and DNA and
453 genetics. That's all going around today in our society and life, you know, with
454 genetics or, you know, evolution. Everybody, you know, elevates to, you know,
455 being around better things, your body grows. So, I mean, it would just, Science in
456 the class was more hands-on, it was more, you know, work towards. It was, it just
457 taught us a lot. Well, it taught me personally a lot more about the origin of Science
458 and how Science came about and what Science is, in order for me to tell you what
459 Science is now as compared to what it was in class.